

amazon  
Unwrapped

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The ideology is more than authoritarianism  
combined with racism >>Pages 14&15

Why fascism is a  
movement of despair



# Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2484 | 19 December 2015 | socialistworker.co.uk



THE MUSLIM graveyard  
near the 'jungle' refugee  
camp in Calais where many  
refugees are buried  
PICTURE: JULIEN JAULIN/HANS LUCAS

They fled poverty, tyranny and war. But so far  
24 refugees have died at Britain's border this  
year because David Cameron won't let them in

# TORIES' CALAIS SHAME

## OPEN THE BORDER NOW

### HEALTH SERVICE

#### NHS students plan national demo to defend bursaries

TORY HEALTH secretary  
Jeremy Hunt faces a  
fresh revolt as NHS  
students organise to  
defend their bursaries.

The Tories plan to axe  
bursaries for student nurses,  
midwives and others.

But momentum is growing  
for a national demonstration  
on 9 January.

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### SYRIA



#### Protesters vow to stop hypocrite Cameron's war

UP TO 5,000 people  
marched through central  
London in protest at Britain  
bombing Syria last Saturday.

Stop the War groups  
and trade union branches  
mobilised for the protest.

Many of those marching  
also condemned the  
Islamophobia that has come  
with the war drive.

>>Pages 4&5

### FRANCE

#### The fascist Front National grabs a record vote

THE FASCIST Front National  
(FN) won its highest ever  
vote last Sunday in the  
second round of France's  
regional elections.

Some 6.82 million people  
backed the FN—almost one in  
six eligible voters. It came first  
in swathes of constituencies.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'It's a disaster'

US Republican Donald Trump on droughts—specifically how rules to conserve water means he can't wash his hair properly

### 'Thank you to respected columnist Katie Hopkins of Daily Mail for her powerful writing on the UK's Muslim problems'

Donald Trump tries to convince people that his Twitter account is a fake

### 'Donald Trump has sparked outrage by claiming parts of Britain are no-go areas because of Islamic extremism'

The Daily Mail newspaper

### 'Islamic extremists have created "no-go areas" around Britain'

The Mail says—"That's our job!"

### 'We will shoot him in the head. Immediately. Ten times'

Labour MP Jess Phillips on how shoot to kill works



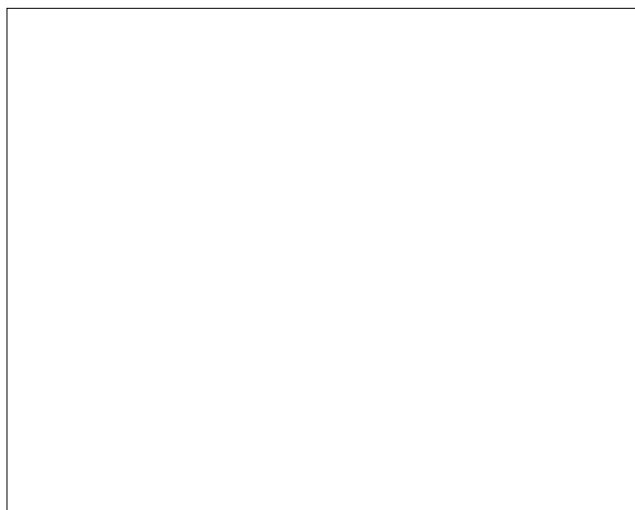
# Joy for Murdoch and Morgan as hacking cases are halted

**EVIDENCE** AT the trials of Sun journalists showed that Rupert Murdoch's newspaper group prompted the police investigation into payments by its own papers. It did so because it wanted to escape a corporate prosecution for corruption. It has got its way.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) ended the investigation into media phone hacking after four years and ten months.

As The Times noted with a level of self-awareness, "The practices exposed by Operation Weeting were lazy, callous and corrupt."

As Kelvin Mackenzie, former editor now columnist on the Sun, pointed out, "If it hadn't been for the deep pockets of News Corp, for the brilliance of the defence



PIERS MORGAN, Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson

QCs and the sheer will of Rupert Murdoch, there could have been a very different outcome."

As the hacking file was

closed, former Daily Mirror editor Piers Morgan was celebrating. He said he would "get spectacularly drunk".

David Cameron said

that the second part of the Leveson inquiry has not been cancelled.

That was the bit that was actually going to look at phone hacking.

Cameron's spokesperson is the only one who doesn't think it will be quietly forgotten.

People who sold information to hacks were convicted. Journalists less so.

One of those who was is previous Cameron spin doctor Andy Coulson.

He took to the pages of the Daily Telegraph last week to warn that some Muslim inmates operate "protection rackets" inside British jails—forcing vulnerable young men to grow beards.

So it is business as usual.

And a classic establishment fix has saved the establishment blushes.

● A US town has rejected a proposal for a solar farm. During the Woodland Town Council meeting, in North Carolina, one said solar farms would suck up all the energy from the sun. A retired science teacher said she was concerned the panels would prevent plants in the area from photosynthesizing, stopping them from growing.



● NEARLY NINE out of ten people feel under pressure to spend too much this year. But 45 percent say they plan to spend less on Christmas 2015 than they did last year. One in seven say they'll need to borrow to afford Christmas. Hardest hit are the 34 to 44 age group, nearly a quarter saying they will get into debt.

## The 'war on terror' gets festive lights

THE WAR against terror opened a new front last week in Limerick, York County, in the US.

Christmas lights featuring a Santa Claus urinating on lights spelling out the name of terror group Isis were displayed.

But neighbours called the local sheriff's department about it—because they thought that the resident might be an Isis supporter.

Sheriff William King told the Portland Press Herald, "Sheriff's deputies

visited the home and the word 'Isis' is lit up bright and clear. What is not so clear is that Santa Claus is 'relieving' himself on the word."

● CLOSER TO home in Southampton Ukip member Timothy Miller covered up the side of his home with a festive bit of racism.

It reads, "Dear Father Christmas, an EU exit is the only present for me if not, it had better be a Koran and lessons in Arabic".

Timothy Miller and banner

## That's 438 years more for bad behaviour

ALMOST 160,000 days—or 438 years—of additional imprisonment were imposed on prisoners found to have broken prison rules last year.

This is according to a report by the Howard League for Penal Reform.

Disciplinary hearings called adjudications mainly concern disobedience, disrespect or property offences. They increase as prisons lose control under pressure of overcrowding and staff cuts. A prisoner

found guilty at an adjudication can face punishments ranging from loss of canteen rights to solitary confinement and extra days of imprisonment.

The number of adjudications where extra days could be imposed has increased by 47 percent since 2010.

The number of extra days imposed on children has almost doubled in two years, even though the number of children in prison has almost halved.

No solution

## Mail comes out against private schools...again

THE DAILY Mail came out against privatisation in schools again this week.

It raged against the "Muslim takeover" of a school where most children are white.

The Tauheedul Education Trust (TET) is set to run Highfield Humanities College in Blackpool. The TET runs ten Islamic schools.

This follows a Mail story in October bemoaning "fears" that a "Muslim academy trust" was going to run three secondary schools.

Troublemaker senses a theme developing.



# £0

Tax paid by Cadbury's on British sales of £2 billion and profit of almost £150 million in 2014

# £4,327

Corporation tax paid by Facebook in 2014

## Blair—the private citizen for Gaddafi

TONY BLAIR has denied he was trying to save Colonel Gaddafi when he urged him to flee Libya days before rebels killed him. Blair rang Gaddafi in October 2011.

He told MPs on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, "My concern was not for his safety."

"My concern was to get him out of the situation so a peaceful transition could take place."

Records of the call show Blair telling Gaddafi, "If you have a safe place to go then you should go there, because this will not end peacefully unless that happens."

Blair said he made the call as a "concerned private citizen".

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# Cameron's border control leaves refugees for dead

by DAVE SEWELL

**YOUSSEF WAS just 16. He should have been looking forward to adult life. Instead, like many other Sudanese people, war forced him to leave his country.**

Now he is dead. He was run over by a van in Calais earlier this month, thousands of miles from home, trying to cross Britain's border.

Less than two weeks earlier it was a young man fleeing the West's war in Iraq. He had been supposed to meet a lorry driver who would smuggle him to England that very day. Police turned him back, and he was hit by a car on the motorway.

Days before that an Afghan man was hit by a train at Cherbourg.

Local charity workers say he fled Afghanistan after the Taliban attacked his house, killing his wife. His three young children are still there.

Some 24 people were known to have been killed at Britain's border in 2015 as Socialist Worker went to press. They are men, women and adolescents fleeing warzones or tyrannical regimes.

## Deadly

They have had to entrust their lives to treacherous boats and unscrupulous gangsters. They've faced violent cops and deadly militia, walked tens, hundreds or even thousands of miles.

But when they got Britain's border David Cameron wouldn't let them in. So they have been drowned, electrocuted, crushed or run over.

Up to 6,000 people are trapped in Calais facing ever worsening conditions (see below).

The Tories sent them higher fences, and pressured French police to make it harder and harder to get around them. France's state of emergency has let local authorities make it a jailable offence to approach the motorway.

Police checkpoints and harassment



CAMERON ENJOYS a stroll along Bulgaria's border

PICTURE: CROWN COPYRIGHT

are increasingly stopping migrants leaving the camp, and volunteers coming to them. Teargas is regularly launched on the tents where whole families sleep.

This increases the risk of dying from health conditions in the camp. But it also makes any attempt to cross the border even more deadly.

Recent months have seen an increase in raids taking migrants to detention. Others have voluntarily left for schemes run by the state, only to be told they will be deported.

## Tougher

Cameron wants tougher controls at the other end of Europe too. The morning after Youssef died Cameron was enjoying a photo op at Bulgaria's new border fence with Turkey.

Bulgarian border cops' bullets have already killed one Afghan refugee. And Greek and Bulgarian fences that stop migrants entering Europe by land have driven hundreds of thousands to come by sea instead.

At least six children were among the dead on the latest boat to sink last week. In another, a mother and her seven children all drowned.

Cameron said, "It is important that Europe has strong external borders" and "there are real lessons to be learned here about (how) if you give it the priority you can get it done."

Britain has committed border officials to help "screen" refugees who arrive in Greece as part of a European Union (EU) scheme. Over 1,000 people were driven back to Athens last week after being evicted from a refugee camp at Macedonia's border.

Cameron is set to join talks on creating a standing European border force at this week's EU summit. And he will be pleading for measures against migrants from within the EU.

Migrants and refugees are making heroic efforts in horrible circumstances—we can't let Cameron get away with locking them out.

## IN BRIEF

### Inquests hear of signs of life

FRESH INQUESTS into the deaths of victims crushed during the Hillsborough football disaster have heard evidence of signs of life following the crush.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of the 1989 disaster.

More at [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)

### Call for inquiry into Orgreave

CAMPAIGNERS fighting for justice over Orgreave were set to submit legal papers to home secretary Theresa May on Thursday of this week.

They want a public inquiry into the policing of miners picketing at the Orgreave coking plant during the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

Go to [otjc.org.uk](http://otjc.org.uk)

### Rise in reported domestic abuse

NEW FIGURES show a 31 percent rise in recorded domestic abuse cases between 2013 and 2015 in England and Wales.

A police watchdog criticised the police response in abuse cases. It said 31 out of 43 police forces must improve their protection of vulnerable people.

### Jobs threat for 5,000 from IDS

UP TO 5,000 housing welfare advisers face the axe as Tory Iain Duncan Smith (IDS) rolls out Universal Credit.

The Department for Work and Pensions minister confirmed the losses as the benefits the workers help people claim for are ditched.

## Holiday greetings to all our readers



- The next issue of Socialist Worker is due to print on Tuesday 5 January 2016
- Until then check our website for reports and updates
- Send news and reports to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

[socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)

## Cops try to block activists bringing aid

By EMMA DAVIS and ZAK COCHRANE

UP TO 100 people visited the Calais "jungle" refugee camp over two days last weekend as part of the Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) winter appeal. They brought over £10,000 in aid.

Conditions have significantly worsened since SUTR's last visit.

It was a cold and rainy day, and in some places the mud was over a foot deep. Aid workers report that the number of women and children there has tripled.

Refugees were eager to hear about what activists are doing to get the border open, and to share their own stories.

Police blockaded the camp for



Organising to open Britain's border

PICTURE: GEOFF DEXTER

several hours, and pushed over Labour MEP Julie Ward. A small far right protest took place nearby to coincide with France's election.

Leading trade unionists, local councillors and representatives from mosques and churches joined the trip.

They held a meeting in the camp with activists from other countries, and launched a statement demanding Britain's government open the border.

Aid is important, and so far there still hasn't been enough.

But the solution isn't in the camp—it's forcing the government to let them into Britain.

To sign the statement contact [info@standuptoracism.org.uk](mailto:info@standuptoracism.org.uk)

## IN THIS WEEK

# 1989

### Stalinist regime in Romania toppled

PROTESTS erupted across Romania on 16 December. Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu sent in the army and the police. Strikes and protests led to Ceausescu's fall.

He was executed on 25 December.





# Protesters vow to stop hypocrite Cameron's war agenda

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**UP TO 5,000 people marched through central London in protest at Britain bombing Syria last Saturday. The Stop the War Coalition called the demonstration.**

Stop the War groups and trade union branches had mobilised for the protest.

Abhijith, a school student from Bristol, had helped organise a local 1,000 strong anti-war protest last week. "Young people really connect when they see other young people dying in Syria," he said. "But David Cameron's got a different agenda."

"He isn't looking at what bombing did in Iraq and what it's doing now in Yemen."

Humaira was part of a large contingent from Rotherham. She said, "David Cameron's an arsehole. He claims he's bombing Isis, but bombing Syria is just going to kill innocent people and make more refugees."

"Muslims are being made to feel like they're not part of Britain and racist attacks will increase."

Hafsah added, "It will just make the problems worse—it won't make Britain safer."

## Banners

Some marchers came with their union banners. Unite union leader Len McCluskey sent a message of support and NUT union executive member Alex Kenny spoke.

Mandy Brown, Lambeth College UCU member, slammed the Tories' hypocrisy on austerity. "The Tories are cutting courses and they tell us there's no money for education," she said.

"But there's always an unlimited pot of cash for their wars."

Many people were furious with the Labour MPs who'd backed the Tories.

Fatima from Birmingham said, "We went and asked our MP Stephen Speller why he voted for bombing."

"Was it because people had written to him asking

## BACK STORY

**British RAF planes joined US-led airstrikes in Syria last month**

● They have also been bombing Iraq for over a year, and the campaign could spread to Libya

● Labour's leader Jeremy Corbyn opposed the bombing, but 66 of its MPs rebelled to vote for war

● Russia is bombing Syria too. Its forces and Turkey's clashed for the second time last week

● Syrians are also under attack from dictator Bashar al Assad's counter-revolution, and Isis

him to? No. He just didn't have an answer—they're just Tory-lite."

Tez Livin from Derby had rejoined Labour to back Corbyn. He said, "I'm not surprised those Labour MPs voted to bomb Syria, they're just careerists."

"Now grassroots campaigning is crucial because the Parliamentary Labour Party doesn't represent us."

The march made its way from the BBC to a rally outside Downing Street.

Peter Brierley, who spoke at the rally, told Socialist Worker, "My son was killed in Iraq. The same as happened in Iraq is happening in Syria now."

"All bombing does is kill people and destroy infrastructure."

The Tories say bombing will help Syrians. But Nadim Nassar from Syria told the rally, "What's happening in Syria we haven't seen since the Second World War. Why can't they learn from history?"

There were also a number of local demonstrations.

In London, a message from Jeremy Corbyn was read out. It said, "Most of all you've called it right on the wars of the last 14 years. We can and will bring these wars to an end."

Go to [stopwar.org.uk](http://stopwar.org.uk) for more news of protests



THOUSANDS MARCHED in London last Saturday

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

## We're right to build the anti-war movement, despite right's attack

by JUDITH ORR

**THE STOP the War Coalition (STWC) faced an unprecedented onslaught from politicians and parts of the press over the past week.**

But Lindsey German from STWC told Saturday's rally, "We won't be apologising for anything. What we said has been proved right and our government has been proved wrong."

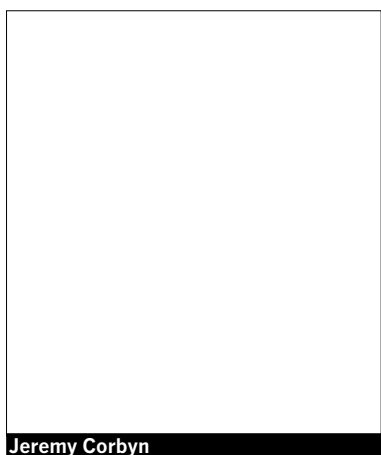
"We did the right thing in the past and will continue doing it."

A Christmas fundraising dinner organised by STWC in London became the focus for a media frenzy.

Some right wing Labour MPs put pressure on Jeremy Corbyn not to attend. They wanted him to disown the organisation that he had been chair of until he won the Labour leadership election.

They were angry at the protests against those MPs who had voted to support David Cameron in the vote to bomb Syria.

Thousands of protesters have



Jeremy Corbyn

marched in London and in other towns and cities to oppose the bombing of Syria. Labour MPs have received hundreds of emails and anti-war campaigners have picketed MPs' surgeries.

But Corbyn defied the furore and went to the dinner. He made a strong speech defending the record of the anti-war movement.

To cheers and applause from activists there he said he was

"proud to be associated with the Stop the War Coalition" and that "branding it as somehow illegitimate is an attempt to close down democratic debate and campaigning."

At the same time as STWC was coming under attack from the right some on the left joined in criticisms. STWC was accused of not denouncing dictator Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, or the bombing by Assad's ally Russia.

Some supporters within what is a wide coalition of different activists take differing views. But STWC has publicly stated it does not support Assad or Russia's bombing.

Socialist Worker opposes all foreign intervention in Syria whether by the US, Britain or Russia.

We have stood with those fighting in Syria's popular revolution against Assad's regime.

Assad is responsible for the deaths of over a quarter of a million Syrian people struggling for freedom and democracy.

## Labour MPs lay into left, but voters back Corbyn

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR LEFT group Momentum came under sustained attack by "moderates" and right wingers in the party last week.

Labour deputy leader Tom Watson said the group was a vehicle for socialists outside of Labour to try and take over.

Shadow culture secretary Michael Dugher went further, calling it a "mob".

He added, "Their aggression is matched only by their stupidity. I don't know what the point of them is."

Momentum was launched to build on the success of Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader.

Corbyn is Dugher and Watson's real target. They want to undermine his leadership by attacking his base of support.

Meanwhile another Labour group, Open Labour, was launched as an organisation for Labour's "soft left" last Wednesday.

Momentum has said

it will bring in new rules stopping non-Labour members from taking up positions or attending decision-making meetings or meetings about Labour.

But this clampdown risks constraining the movement that got Corbyn elected within an electoral party that is deeply hostile to its aims.

Corbyn's hand was strengthened by a poll released last Sunday. It suggested that 25 percent of voters think he is turning out to be a good Labour leader.

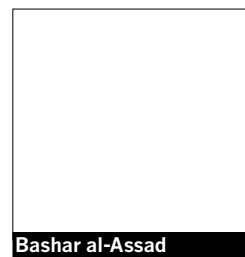
This is significantly

more than the 17 percent Ed Miliband got at the same stage of his leadership.

Some 40 percent thought Corbyn "offers a positive difference from other politicians". And 37 percent think the media treat him unfairly.

The figures reflect the support he won through a leadership campaign offering an alternative to war, racism and austerity.

They also show he is at his strongest when defying the right, and relating to broad-based, outward looking movements.



Bashar al-Assad

been allowed in for almost a year.

A truce deal allowed around 700 rebel fighters to leave with their families to be bussed to another

rebel held area in Idlib province. Those accepting the truce remained. Many were in desperate need of medical treatment.

Assad is tightening the grip of his counter revolution.

Where constant bombardment does not crush the opposition Assad relies on the siege tactic, denying the poorest citizens basic access to food, medicines and power.

## Rival powers agree on killing

BRITAIN HAS joined Western airstrikes on Syria to ensure its place in the ongoing carve up of the Middle East.

Those Syrians least able to escape are at most risk from the increased bombardment. They face strikes by the West, Russia and

Assad's barrel bombs, as well as by Isis forces on the ground.

Western intervention is no solution.

The West bears responsibility for the conditions that fuelled the rise of Isis.

The only way out is for the imperialist powers to pull out

of the Middle East entirely.

They use the ordinary people of the region as pawns in a geopolitical power struggle.

This must be stopped in order to open up the possibility for genuine self-determination for the people of the region.

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## OBSCENE SYSTEM BEHIND WAR AND REFUGEE CRISIS

**T**HE PLIGHT of refugees exposes all that is rotten about capitalism. Many are fleeing violent conflict fuelled by imperialist wars the West has waged.

Others are escaping poverty and oppression.

All are willing to risk their lives to find a better life because life is not worth living in the places they leave.

But they are treated as criminals by the West. They are fenced in, put in insanitary camps and portrayed as dangerous scroungers.

Yet they are the most vulnerable victims of the chaos that is a system based on profit and competition.

Under capitalism you only have access to a home, to clean water, to food and health care if you have the money to pay for it.

This is a system that lets whole families drown when their overcrowded boats sink, while passenger ferries safely sail the same route every day.

There has been a huge movement of people across seas and the continent of Europe.

The Tories' response has been

to shut the door.

They have only let in a handful of handpicked Syrian families vetted by officials in refugee camps in the region.

They turn their back on hundreds of thousands of others desperate to find a place of safety and the chance to build a life.

They refuse to take in any of those trapped in the mud in the Calais refugee camp who are trying to find refuge in Britain.

The Tories howl that we don't have enough space, that there aren't enough homes, school places or NHS beds.

They use the poison of racist propaganda to scapegoat refugees and migrants. They want us to fear

**“All refugees and migrants are welcome here, whether escaping war or poverty**

“outsiders” and treat them with suspicion.

They want to deflect the blame for cuts and crisis onto the victims of the system instead of those in charge.

But Britain is a rich country. The problem is that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few people at the top of society.

They defend their right to hold onto that wealth by pretending they are defending us.

Socialist Worker says all refugees and migrants are welcome here, whether escaping war or poverty.

It doesn't matter if you were born in Britain or anywhere else in the world, we have enough resources to make sure that no one ever goes without.

There are a few things we could do immediately.

We could dump Trident nuclear missiles, stop all spending on arms and wars, and tax the rich.

But we need to do more.

We need to end the obscenity of a system that punishes people for being poor, or being caught up in wars they can't control.

That means fighting for a socialist society without war, oppression and exploitation.

## SHOOT FIRST SMEAR LATER

**C**OULD A police officer face prosecution for murder? Perhaps.

Jermaine Baker, a black man, was shot dead near Wood Green crown court in London on Friday of last week. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) announced a criminal investigation.

Jermaine died after police swooped as part of an operation on people who may have tried to spring people from court. Apparently,

The crime correspondents have all come to the same conclusion. It happens to be the police version of events.

Jermaine was from Tottenham, north London, where the shooting dead of Mark Duggan by police in 2011 led to rioting. That is enough to give anonymous police sources and the press free rein to smear Jermaine.

The cops say he might have been in a gang linked to a gang

Mark Duggan might have been in. Initial witness reports that a

suspect had “come out firing” have already been discredited.

The non-police gun retrieved from the scene was an imitation. And a man other than Jermaine has been charged with its possession.

Meanwhile Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Terry, said, “All of our officers involved in Friday's operation are receiving all the support we can provide.”

As always the police are pampered. We can only rely on our resistance.

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## ANALYSIS

YURI PRASAD



## Political disillusion has boosted Trump

**DONALD TRUMP'S racist words targeting Muslims have had a cancerous effect.**

The US presidential hopeful recently called for a ban on all Muslims from entering the US. Within days a sharp spike in Islamophobia was reported.

An arsonist targeted a mosque in Southern California with a firebomb on Friday of last week, just before prayers when the building was largely empty. If the bomber had hit a little later many could have been injured or killed.

Racists also targeted the office of Hussam Ayloush of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

Hussam said, "Hate speech has consequences. Hate incidents do not occur in a vacuum. They are the natural result of a climate fuelled by hatred, by fear-mongering."

CAIR said the firebombing is the 63rd attack on a mosque in the US so far this year, with 17 of those attacks taking place in November. The previous record was 53 attacks in 2010.

Almost the entire political establishment has been quick to distance itself from Trump and the racist attacks. Even fellow right wing Republicans joined with the White House when it denounced Trump's call as "un-American".

But how can anyone take their words seriously when they have spent years fanning the flames of Islamophobia?

The West's wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan are routinely couched in terms of bringing "civilisation" to barbaric lands. What were the US prisons in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay designed to do if not a humiliate Muslims?

What is "extraordinary rendition" if not a signal that Muslims do not deserve the justice accorded to non-Muslims?

Trump feels able to make ever more racist statements because mainstream politicians cleared the ground for him.

The racism whipped up at the top dovetails with the growing insecurity of middle and working class Americans to create a poisonous cocktail.

According to the Pew Research Center, the share of the national wealth of middle income households was 43 percent in 2014. That's down from 62 percent in 1970. Fifteen million people earn £6.60 an hour or less.

### Declined

In terms of purchasing power, the annual income of a minimum wage earner has declined by 32 percent since 1968. Meanwhile, the share of income going to richer households rose from 29 percent to 49 percent over the same period.

No wonder that seven in ten Americans believe the US is still in recession and most say that America's best days are in the past.

Trump's supporters are typically white, poorly educated, more likely to be male and older. For many all that is left of the American Dream is a sense of pessimism. This is reflected by an increasing fixation on crime, immigration and Muslims.

Attacks on Trump from those at the top can only deepen his supporters' hatred of the establishment. The more they attack Trump, the more he can portray himself as a radical, rather than the billionaire property developer that he is.

But the Republican right are not the only ones that understand the disenchantment.

Bernie Sanders' campaign for the Democratic nomination for presidential candidate has galvanised massive popular feeling among workers. It shows that another response to the crisis is possible.

He has called for a "political revolution" and espouses left wing social democratic ideas. He wants a clampdown on corporations that avoid tax.

Also championing the poor is the revived movement on the streets, particularly the Black Lives Matters campaign. This is increasingly making links with migrant groups and low paid workers.

Mainstream Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton hopes that she can derail both these challenges by pointing to the sheer awfulness of Trump. The mantra of the Democratic right is that a vote for anyone but Hillary will let Trump in.

But giving way to Clinton is a sure-fire way of allowing Trump to continue to present himself as the outsider. It would be a tragedy if the left fell for such blackmail.

# Shaker Aamer—'British state was complicit in my torture'

The last British resident to be freed from Guantanamo Bay, Shaker Aamer, has described his torture in the camp, writes Judith Orr

**SHAKER AAMER has spoken out for the first time since he was released from Guantanamo Bay in October.**

Shaker was held for 14 years by the US, first in Bagram prison in Afghanistan and then in the notorious Guantanamo prison camp.

He accused Tony Blair and Jack Straw of allowing the US to torture him.

And he described British officials visiting him in Bagram and witnessing his torture.

Shaker said one watched as "This American guy grabs me by the head, and he slams it backwards against the wall.

"In my mind I think I must try to save my head so I tried to bring it forwards, but as soon as I do he grabs it again and bashes it: douff, then back again, douff, douff, douff."

Shaker said the British man had a "posh accent" and blond hair. He did nothing to stop Shaker's torture.

Shaker said, "Everything that happened to us is a war crime in Guantanamo.

"Everybody is going to be scared, even Tony Blair, I believe he is scared right now to go behind bars."

Shaker said his hope of rescue rose on 7 January 2002 because a guard told him Tony Blair was coming to visit after the fall of the Taliban.



**A 2013 protest to free Shaker Aamer (main) and Shaker Aamer after his release (left)**

MAIN PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



beating, I didn't even know what I looked like. I hadn't seen my face in months."

Shaker described how US officers "used to jump on my face with their boots.

### Freezing

"Imagine in the freezing cold winter, on concrete in the middle of the airport, and young guards are beating you, they beat the hell out of you with their M16s, and jumping on your face and your body with their boots.

"These guards were doing it as a systematic torture.

"Every time somebody arrived, they had to beat the shit out of him, to make him know that if he does anything wrong, if he tries or thinks of running away he

will never make it."

Shaker led the camp's first mass hunger strike against the conditions in 2005 despite being in solitary confinement.

He scratched away the glue around his cell window with a fork, which broke the soundproof seal so he was able to shout to other prisoners.

He said, "I called out, 'Who is outside?' and then we transfer information."

Shaker said he will not stop campaigning till the full truth is exposed and Guantanamo is shut down.

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Tory attack targets council housing

**THE GOVERNMENT is set to end lifetime tenancies for council tenants, in an amendment to the Housing and Planning Bill.**

This has been a key aim of the Tories for more than five years—and comes as part of a raft of attacks on council housing.

Budget cuts this year hit councils' ability to build new homes. And a discount to the Right to Buy scheme pushes them to sell them off.

The new amendment imposes a five-year cap on new tenancies. It wouldn't affect existing lifetime



A council housing campaigner

tenants. But it would affect their children if they try to keep their homes after their parents die.

The government said, "We want to support households to make the transition into home ownership."

But many former council homes sold under right to buy are now in the hands of rip-off private landlords.

Attacking council housing is about extending the market forces that drive the housing crisis—not empowering tenants.

[defendcouncilhousing.org.uk](http://defendcouncilhousing.org.uk)

### FIGURE IT OUT

**11** million people across Britain rent from private landlords

**3.3** million 20-34 year olds live with their parents because they can't afford private rents

**1.3** million households in England are on local authorities' housing waiting lists



# Nursing students fight cut to bursaries

Tory attack on poorer students' right to train for NHS provokes fightback, reports **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

**TORY HEALTH** secretary Jeremy Hunt is facing a fresh NHS revolt as healthcare students organise to defend their bursaries.

George Osborne announced plans to axe bursaries for student nurses, midwives and others in last month's Autumn Statement. But they are fighting back with plans for a national demonstration on Saturday 9 January.

Student nurse Danielle in London is one of the organisers.

"On the day the decision was announced I already had people coming up to me," she told Socialist Worker. "People with children especially said they couldn't afford to study nursing without a bursary."

"This will put people off from studying nursing."

"I'm from a poorer background and got here because of working hard and the bursary. But nurses' salaries are already capped at 1 percent—and to have £50,000 of debt of top of that is too much."

This tears apart the Tory claims that removing the cap on nursing training places and axing bursaries will ease the staffing crisis.

Andy, a student nurse with children, added, "I know I wouldn't have been able to do it. You have to deal with nursery fees, after school clubs—so you just won't take on loads of debt to step into a low paid job."

## Shortage

Hunt said that the NHS couldn't "duck difficult decisions and have a shortage of nurses in five years".

But NHS trusts in London and the South East are spending 81 percent more on temporary staff than five years ago. The Tories have also slashed training. In 2014 there were 57,000 people chasing just 20,000 training places.

This crisis was created by the Tories' privatisation drive.

Hunt claimed the £800 million cut was necessary to relieve "enormous pressure on hospital finances".

Hospitals are struggling because of "real terms" budget cuts—and

## BACK STORY

**Tory health minister Jeremy Hunt is attacking workers across the NHS**

● Attacks on working hours and overtime pay under the guise of "seven day working" affect millions of workers

● Junior doctors have a live dispute over the changes to their contracts, and almost struck earlier this month

● Now plans to axe NHS student bursaries could exclude working class students and worsen the understaffing crisis

many are saddled with private finance initiative (PFI) debts.

Danielle said, "There's money for a 10 percent pay rise for MPs, wars and bombing people. But what's more important than the health and wellbeing of society? That should be the first priority."

The attack is fuelling a widespread anger in the NHS.

Danielle said, "We're getting leaflets printed to put around in hospitals and we're trying to reach out to other NHS students and beyond London."

"The demo is really taking off. We've had messages of support from the junior doctors."

"And the Royal College of Nursing, Unite and UCU unions have backed the demo and the Royal College of Midwives said they're getting back to us."

Hunt thought he could streamroll ahead with attacks on the NHS after the British Medical Association suspended junior doctors' strikes last month.

But once again he's facing resistance from the grassroots.

The student nurses' fight shows the kind of resistance needed to stop him. It should be a new focus for everyone who wants to defend the NHS.



**On other pages...**

There will be more deaths if you keep cutting fire service >>Page 17



STUDENT NURSES protesting in London earlier this month

PICTURE: JULIE SHERRY

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

# Privatisation will only deepen failure

by **SADIE ROBINSON**

**DAVID CAMERON** has said the Tories will take "failing" children's services out of the control of local authorities. They could be handed to "teams of experts".

Cameron is using child abuse scandals such as that in Rotherham (see below), where councils failed to protect children, to push privatisation.

Education secretary Nicky Morgan said improving services was "not just about money".

She played down the impact of Tory cuts to council funding saying, "Local authorities have



Tory education secretary Nicky Morgan

protected children's services."

Yet funding for young people's services in Rotherham was slashed by 59 percent between 2010-11 and 2011-12.

Cuts of over 50 percent were

also imposed in Sheffield and Hull.

Rotherham suffered one of the biggest cuts in the whole of Yorkshire. The budget was cut again by 26 percent between 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Funding for young people's services in Leeds was slashed by nearly a third in real terms between 2010-11 and 2012.

Figures compiled by charity 4Children in October showed that two thirds of children's centres in England had their budgets cut in the previous 12 months.

Tory cuts make children less safe—and privatising key services won't make them safer.

## FIGURE IT OUT

**59%**  
of Rotherham council's funding for young people's services was cut from 2010-11 to 2011-12

**26%**  
of what was left was slashed in new cuts the following year

**2 in 3**  
children's centres in England had their budgets cut in past year

# Witness in Rotherham trial

A WITNESS giving evidence to a major sexual abuse trial has told a court that she was abused aged 15.

The court heard that the witness told authorities in 1992 she was pressured to prostitute herself with taxi drivers who knew Karen MacGregor.

MacGregor is one of seven defendants on trial over offences

that allegedly took place in Rotherham.

The others are Shelley Davies, Arshid Hussain, Basharat Hussain, Qurban Ali, Majid Bostan and Sajid Bostan. All deny charges including rape, conspiracy to rape, indecent assault, false imprisonment and abduction.

The prosecution says MacGregor

"deliberately set out to make girls available for sexual encounters with older men".

The witness gave evidence to Sheffield Crown Court on Monday of this week.

She is not one of the 12 alleged victims who are the complainants. The trial continues.

Longer version at [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)



# Fascist Front National grabs a record vote in French elections

The fascist Front National failed to win control of any regional councils in last week's elections—but it won a record vote, says **Dave Sewell**

**THE FASCIST Front National (FN) won its highest ever vote last Sunday in the second round of France's regional elections.**

Some 6.82 million people backed the FN—almost one in six eligible voters.

It came first in swathes of constituencies in every region.

The FN led the first round in six of France's 13 regional councils. But a surge in turnout in the second round blocked the FN from winning the presidency of any regional councils.

This mostly benefitted Nicolas Sarkozy's centre right alliance. It won seven regions including its strategic target Paris region.

The centre left around president Francois Hollande's Socialist Party (PS) was also boosted, keeping five regions after being predicted to lose all but two.

The surge underlines a widespread and persistent hatred of the fascists. But the FN has cemented its place as the driving force in French politics.

It gained over 350 regional councillors and became the main opposition in four regions. And it set the agenda for mainstream parties.

In the north and south east, the Socialists ordered all their candidates to step down.

These regions, previously run by the centre left, now have only fascist and Tory councillors.

Yet in the east Socialist candidate Jean-Pierre Masseret refused to step down. Predictions that this would let in the FN proved wrong and he increased his vote.

Sarkozy pledged to begin a debate on the right after leading

## BACK STORY

**The second round of France's regional elections took place last Sunday**

● The fascist Front National (FN) had led the first round in six of France's 13 regional councils

● A surge in turnout meant it didn't win the presidency of any in the second round

● But the party still scored its highest ever vote

● Mainstream parties' strategy of backing Tories against the FN risks demobilising workers

Tories attacked him for not cooperating with the PS. This reinforces calls for a grand coalition in 2017's presidential election.

Left wing opposition parties in many regions merged their lists with the Socialists against the right.

But the main parties are responsible for the FN's growth.

Rallying to them vindicates its attempts to pose as the only alternative to a hated political establishment.

And it risks further demobilising a diverse working class under attack from those very politicians.

Better—if sporadic—responses came from anti-fascists who covered FN offices with their posters, and college students who walked out and struck in Rouen.



MUSLIMS JOINED a 700-strong anti-racist rally near Paris on Friday of last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Muslims join mass rally to condemn mainstream parties' Islamophobia

CAMPAIGNERS SLAMMED the mainstream parties' Islamophobia at a rally near Paris on Friday of last week.

Up to 700 Muslims and anti-racists filled the main hall of a trade union building in Saint Denis.

Academic Tariq Ramadan compared the response to terrorist attacks in France this year to those in the US after 9/11.

Ismahane Chouder of the Collective of Feminists for Equality said attacks on the right to wear a headscarf meant "some women are more equal than others".

Racist harassment of Muslims has increased along with government attacks on their rights.

Bouchra has just returned to France after ten years in Egypt.

She told Socialist Worker, "I didn't think it was possible for things to change this much. Now

it feels like people are afraid of us. We're not allowed to be ourselves, we're not allowed to live.

"It's not about Islam. It's all politics."

Speakers scorned calls to back the Labour-type Socialist against the Front National (FN), as its government brought repression against Muslims to new heights.

### Internment

Days earlier prime minister Manuel Valls sought legal advice on setting up "preventative" internment camps for those classed as extremists.

The number of people in this category doubled to 20,000—the majority of them Muslims—between August and November.

Chair Sihame Assbague called for putting slips of paper saying "no votes without justice" in ballot boxes instead of voting papers.

Campaigner Marwan Muhammad criticised much of the left, "who couldn't be here because they found it more important to justify themselves to racists."

Salma Yaqoob, a leading figure from the anti-war movement in Britain, pointed to what could be gained from cooperation between Muslims and the left.

Hanane Karimi is a campaigner in eastern France where the FN led the first round.

She told Socialist Worker, "A victory for the FN would be a catastrophe for everyone.

"But its ideas have been allowed to become so widespread that it becomes a possibility.

"Politics have lurched to the far right. The Socialist Party has been the best possible advert for the FN.

"In France there is no political alternative—and perhaps we need to build one."

## Protest blocks Greek Nazis

ANTI-FASCISTS marched through the port town of Piraeus, Greece, to stop an event by the fascist Golden Dawn party last Sunday.

The mobilisation was called by trade unions, local campaigns, and the Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (Keerfa).

Golden Dawn is struggling to build at the same time as its leaders are on trial over their role in the party's violent and criminal actions.

Some Golden Dawn members are on trial over the murder of anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas.

The Nazis tried to hold an "award ceremony" in a public cinema but were forced to retreat to hold it in their own office.

Anti-fascists aim to push on until the Golden Dawn office is shut down.

Keerfa was set to hold a rally outside the fascists' trial on Thursday morning of this week.



### On other pages...

Fascism—a movement of despair  
>> Pages 14&15



## A religious socialist

NICK ASKED if it was possible to be Christian and a socialist (Letters, 12 December).

I am a member of the Socialist Workers Party and a Christian, though I don't believe in miracles.

Religion under class society is a mass of contradictions.

It's riddled with superstition, intolerance and hierarchy. But it also meets deep spiritual needs and cries out for social justice.

I think under socialism we could still find value in our world's myths and spiritual practices. In the meantime religion is also cultural, and a mass socialist party will have many religious people in it.

**Margaret Stone**  
Sheffield

## Re-drawing the map

YOU MADE two mistakes in your map which was supposed to represent the regional control in Syria (Socialist Worker, 5 December).

First, you accepted the annexation of the occupied Golan to Israel.

Second, you gave the control of the border area along the Golan to the Syrian regime.

But the Israeli armed forces ousted the Syrian army out of its strongholds along the border back in 2012, and let al-Nusra in.

Not only that, but Israel is actively supporting al-Nusra by shielding it from Hizbollah and the Syrian army, and providing logistical support.

**Ron Cohen**  
London

## Affiliating to Labour doesn't help workers

I WAS a member and lay official in the firefighters' FBU union for 25 years. I witnessed the leadership compromising with, and acting in the interests of, the Labour Party rather than members of the FBU.

We only made any progress when the rank and file took matters into their own hands.

That was during the Glasgow strike in 1973 and the national strike in 1977.

The present leadership of



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

# Solidarity amid the floods, but cuts make people suffer

OUR HOUSE in Lancaster was one of 55,000 homes without electricity for two days after Storm Desmond.

The river Lune broke its banks and the flood defences in what is supposed to be a "one in a 100 year" event.

But Cumbria has now had two major floods in less than five years.

Firefighters worked around the clock for 48 hours attending 250 incidents including chemical leaks, stranded people, house fires and vehicle rescue.

They saved lives and nobody in Lancaster died.

Yet government cuts mean that the fire service will be reduced from two pumps to one.

That's a cut of 50 percent. Meanwhile a new flood defence scheme for Kendal, just north of Lancaster, has been delayed for lack of funding.

The scheme was supposed to get £4 million in 2011. Then the Tories cut spending on flood defences by as much as 10 percent.

During the last round of floods in 2014 Cameron said that "money was no object" when it came to spending on flood defences.

But the Kendal scheme was postponed twice more in 2014 and 2015. Now the earliest date will be sometime next year.

What use is that to the thousands of people left homeless by the latest round of flooding?

The madness of austerity will

mean the next "one in a 100" event could lead to lives being lost.

We can find the money for bombs but not for our vital public services.

The real heartening thing to happen though was how people helped each other.

Houses with gas boiled water for houses without, neighbours checked on each other and people gave food away.

This gives a lie to the idea that humans are selfish.

It's the Tories who are the nasty selfish ones. We have to double our efforts to get rid of these scum before it's too late.

**Eugene Doherty**  
Lancaster

## With Syrians against the Tories

SELLING Socialist Worker in Birmingham, I met four Syrians who wanted to take pictures with our "Stop Bombing Syria" posters.

They had made the journey to Britain last month, after spending weeks in Calais.

They finally managed to beat the border guards by clinging onto the



A refugee in Calais

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Eurostar. The same British government that is bombing their country tried to stop them entering Britain, and is refusing them the right to work.

They hate our government. But they wanted to thank everyone who has visited Calais to show them solidarity.

**Richard Donnelly**  
Birmingham

Just a thought...

## Why victimise the virtuous?

YOUR PIECE Keep the Christians out of Christmas, (Socialist Worker, 28 November) is both offensive and confusing. What on earth does "don't let the church muscle in on Christmas" mean?

You rightly condemn Islamophobia, yet you yourselves are peddling Christianophobia.

Merry Christmas.

**Brenda Mcalahan**  
Derbyshire

## Sorry for the slaughter

PEOPLE OF Syria I'm sorry that the butchers who misrepresent us have voted to add to your dead by dropping British bombs on you.

The people who have voted to bomb you are the same people who vilify and persecute refugees.

They do not bomb you in our name.

**Sasha Simic**  
East London

## Saving and taking lives

MY MP Heidi Alexander seems to be a bit confused about which fight she is supposed to be joining.

She joined the fight to save Lewisham Hospital. But she voted for bombing in Syria.

So she fights to save lives here—but votes to take lives abroad.

**Paul Hughes**  
South London

## The publicly-owned war

DAVID CAMERON says Britain cannot afford to "outsource our share" of dropping bombs on Syria.

A strange assertion coming from a government that has insisted on outsourcing just about everything they can lay their hands on!

**John Murphy**  
Blackburn

## Searching for a speech

DOES ANYONE have a tape of Duncan Hallas speaking on the Russian Revolution at Marxism festival in 1987?

Please contact me via Socialist Worker.

**John Charlton**  
Newcastle



# amazon UNWRAPPED

Simon Basketter looks behind the spin of the giant online retailer to examine how it expands by exploiting workers—and what really drives it

**A**MAZON recorded its biggest sales in a day ever earlier this month. The latest invented special shopping day—Black Friday—saw the online superstore shift 7.4 million items in Britain. That is 86 items a second and up from a total of 5.5 million items in 2014.

Amazon has eight giant distribution hubs in Britain with another million square foot warehouse set to open next year. A lorry leaves one of these hubs every three minutes at this time of year.

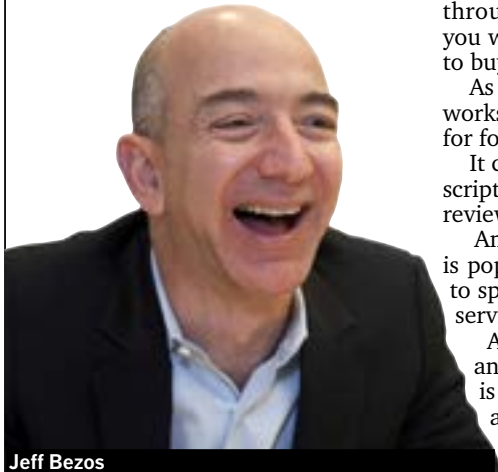
According to Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, “Our culture is friendly and intense, but if push comes to shove, we’ll settle for intense.”

Amazon likes to present itself as a smooth automated machine. In truth it relies on harsh exploitation of people working in its warehouses (see right).

The firm likes to get publicity for plans to replace people with drones to deliver goods.

But in 2014 the US Postal Service announced a special partnership to deliver Amazon—and only Amazon—packages on Sundays. The terms of the deal are secret.

Bezos originally thought of calling his company Relentless.



Jeff Bezos

In 1994 he quit a hedge fund to found a company that could ride the exponential growth of the early commercial internet.

It wasn’t a love of books that led him to start an online bookstore.

Bezos said that Amazon intended to sell books as a way of gathering data on affluent, educated shoppers. He later denied this.

The books were priced close to cost, in order to increase sales. After collecting data on millions of customers, Amazon could figure out how to sell everything else on the internet. Before Google and Facebook did it, Amazon decided that real value lay in the data it collected about its customers.

## Knowledge

It scanned books claiming it was to preserve knowledge. In truth it was so Amazon would have something to put on the company’s e-reader, Kindle.

Now Amazon sells a bewildering array of products.

Customer reviews are a way of getting free ratings on goods. The Amazon Prime service is trying to tie people into using Amazon to shop because it offers free delivery.

The company is currently providing phone apps for free—because so far it has failed to make a breakthrough in mobile phones. Ideally you will use their app on their tablet to buy their products from them.

As a small example of how the firm works, it provides a free programme for formatting scripts.

It comes with a button to submit a script to Amazon. The scripts can be reviewed by anyone.

Amazon is collecting data on what is popular in order to find out what to spend money on for its television services.

At one level it’s a gimmick. At another it shows the reach Amazon is aiming for. The company runs a similar process for self-publishing online books. Neither is an attempt to encourage new

writing. Amazon isn’t that profitable. One reason is that it sees its main task as to expand, and to gain weight and dominance.

So other retailers can sell through Amazon—for a fee. But Amazon keeps the data. And from next year the other retailers will have to use Amazon logistics to deliver their goods—for a fee.

The other reason declared profits are low is tax.

Taxes are airbrushed away. For years, Amazon fought furiously against paying sales taxes where it had no warehouses—and even where it did.

Amazon paid £11.9 million on £5.2 billion of sales last year in Britain last year.

To avoid some cosmetic changes by Tory chancellor George Osborne the company started paying tax on sales in Britain.

But it still bases its operation in Luxembourg for tax purposes. The Luxembourg Amazon charges its own companies enormous fees to keep the tax bill to a minimum.

And despite being the hub for French, German and British sales, it manages to run at a loss.

Amazon’s code of corporate secrecy is extreme—it won’t confirm how many employees globally it has. Nor will it say how many Kindle e-readers have been sold. But it is estimated that its books sales are about 5 percent of its turnover.

With Amazon’s patented 1-Click



**The results generated by Amazon’s search engine are partly determined by fees**

shopping, which already knows your address and credit card information, there’s just you and the BUY button. Transactions are deliberately as quick and thoughtless as scratching an itch.

The company is constantly accumulating information about people. It then uses this information to target sales and drive down the costs of what it buys.

Very early on the company created the “personalisation team,” or P13N. This replaced editorial suggestions with algorithms that used customers’ history to make recommendations for future purchases.

In the great American folk tale worker John Henry competes and wins against a machine. A sign was hung on a wall in the P13N office that read, “PEOPLE FORGET THAT JOHN HENRY DIED IN THE END.”

The formulas may be fancy but few customers realise that the results generated by Amazon’s search engine are partly determined by promotional fees.

## Levels

Amazon sells at different levels of promotion. So in the case of books Amazon takes a cut on a percentage of sales from publishers as “marketing development funds.”

Publishing giant Random House currently gives Amazon an effective discount of around 53 percent. Smaller companies pay more.

Amazon also offers to take an additional payment, amounting to approximately 1 percent of sales.

Once the fee is paid marketing strategies can be discussed with Amazon staff. The fee is optional but without it the product ends up wherever the algorithms put it.

There is more to come. The company has patented “anticipatory shipping”.

This will use your shopping data to put items that you don’t yet know you want to buy on a nearby truck or in a local hub. As the somewhat creepy company missives always end, “This is still Day 1.”



WORKERS IN an Amazon depot in Wales this month

PICTURE: PA

Inside the writing is on the wall

## ‘IT WAS JUST BRUTAL’

**WORKING conditions at Amazon are notorious. It deliberately builds “fulfilment centres” in areas with high unemployment.**

Before workers can go home at the end of their eight-hour shift, or go to the canteen for their 30-minute break, they must walk through a set of security scanners.

Next to the scanners is a life-sized cardboard image of a cheery worker. “This is the best job I have ever had!” pronounces a speech bubble.

Workers are divided into four main groups. There are the people on the “receive lines” and the “pack lines”.

Some unpack, check and scan every product arriving. And some pack up customers’ orders at the other end of the process.

Another group stows away suppliers’ products somewhere in the warehouse. They put things wherever there’s a free space.

Workers use handheld computers to scan both the item they are stowing away and a barcode on the spot on the shelf where they put it.

So only Amazon’s computers know where everything is.

The “pickers” push trolleys around and pick out customers’ orders from the aisles. Amazon’s software calculates the most efficient walking route to collect all the items to fill a trolley.

“You’re sort of like a robot, but in human form,” according to one Amazon manager. “It’s human automation, if you like.”

Pickers holding computerised handsets are perpetually timed and measured as they fast-walk up to 15 miles per shift.

They are expected to collect orders in as little as 33 seconds.

The white collar workers aren’t much better off. Amazon encourages its “Amabots” to harshly criticise

themselves and each other for their shortcomings.

Team members are ranked, and those at the bottom get eliminated every year. It is deliberate policy to keep turnover high.

In 2011 multiple ambulances famously parked outside a US Amazon warehouse during a heat wave.

They were there to collect and ferry overcome workers to emergency rooms. Afterwards Amazon installed air conditioners. Less well known is that the air conditioners’ arrival coincided with the expansion of the warehouse into holding groceries.

## Techniques

Every warehouse has its own “continuous improvement manager” with techniques borrowed from the car industry. As Marc Onetto, the senior vice president of worldwide operations, put it, “They are not consultants, they are insultants, they are really not nice.”

Some people also patrol the warehouses pushing tall little desks on wheels with laptops on them—they are “mobile problem solvers” looking for any hitches that could be slowing down the operation.

Managers can text the hand held screens to tell a worker to hurry up or to issue a warning.

There is a strict “three strikes and release” discipline system—“release” being a euphemism for getting sacked.

An employment agency called Randstad handles the recruitment.

Randstad calls this sort of system “Inhouse Services” and describes it as a “flexible work solution designed exclusively for each client to optimise the workforce and drive cost effectiveness”.

Employees wear blue ID badges. Agency workers wear green ones. “They dangle those blue badges in front of you,” one ex-Amazon worker told the GMB union. “On Christmas Eve an agency rep with a clipboard stood by the exit and said, ‘You’re back after Christmas. And you’re back. And you’re not. You’re not.’ It was just brutal.

“It reminded me of stories about the great depression, where men would stand at the factory gate in the hope of being selected for a few days’ labour.

“You just feel you have no personal value at all.”



**On Christmas Eve an agency rep stood by the exit and said, ‘You’re back. You’re not.’**



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

**These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.**

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### NORWICH

##### Marxism and women's liberation

Speaker, author Judith Orr.  
Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

#### BARNSELEY

##### Is the Labour party about to split?

Thu 7 Jan, 6.30pm,  
YMCA,  
Blucher St, S70 1AP

#### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

##### Marx's Communist Manifesto and our fight for a better world

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

#### BRADFORD

##### After Cop21—why capitalism can't save the planet

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,  
Equity Centre,  
Perkin House,  
82 Grattan Rd,  
BD12LU

#### BRIGHTON

##### Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St, BN1 1AF

#### BRISTOL: NORTH

##### How we beat the anti-union laws in the past and how we can do it today

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
5th Floor, The Canteen,  
Hamilton House,  
80 Stokes Croft, BS1 3QY

#### CHELMSFORD

##### Human nature—are we too selfish for socialism?

Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd,  
CM1 2QL

#### CHESTERFIELD

##### Fast food workers in the US—organising the unorganised

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

#### EXETER

##### Stop bombing Syria—no to war and imperialism

Thu 7 Jan, 7pm,  
New Horizon Cafe,  
47 Longbrook St, EX4 6AW

#### HUDDERSFIELD

##### Is the media all powerful?

Wed 6 Jan, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade,  
(near both train and bus stations), HD1 5JP

#### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

##### After Cop21—why capitalism can't save the planet

Thu 7 Jan, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore  
Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

#### LONDON: BRIXTON

##### A socialist history of the Labour Party

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd  
(near Effra Rd, facing  
Windrush Square),  
SW2 1EP

#### LONDON: EALING

##### Capitalism vs the climate—how do we stop environmental disaster?

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
West London Trade Union Club,  
33-35 Acton High St,  
W3 6ND

### SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

## Prospects for socialists in 2016



LARGE PROTESTS greeted the Tory general election victory in May 2015

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

#### HOME COUNTIES: PUBLIC MEETING

Thu 14 Jan, 8pm,  
Stockwood Hotel,  
41-43 Stockwood Crescent,  
(enter via the car park  
on London Road),  
LU1 3SS

#### ABERDEEN

Thu 14 Jan, 6pm,  
Belmont Filmhouse,  
49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

#### BOLTON

Thu 14 Jan, 6.30pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off  
Bradshawgate),  
BL1 1DY

#### BRISTOL

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,  
5th Floor, The Canteen,  
Hamilton House,  
80 Stokes Croft,  
BS1 3QY

#### CARDIFF

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

#### DERBY

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,  
West End Community Centre,  
Mackworth Rd (next  
to Britannia Mill),  
DE22 3BL

#### LONDON: HACKNEY

##### The rise of the Nazi Front National in France—how can it be stopped?

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd,  
(corner Lower Clapton Rd),  
E5 0PU

#### LONDON: TOTTENHAM

##### Why capitalism breeds war

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Kitabevi Cafe,  
410 Tottenham High Rd,  
N17 9JB

#### MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

##### The rise of the Nazi Front National in France—how can it be stopped?

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,  
Chorlton Central Church  
Meeting Room,  
Barlow Moor Rd,  
M21 8BF

#### DONCASTER

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Women's Centre,  
21 Cleveland St,  
DN1 3EH

#### DUDLEY

Wed 13 Jan, 8pm,  
The What Centre,  
23 Coventry St,  
DY8 1EP

#### DUNDEE

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd,  
DD1 1LL

#### EDINBURGH

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

#### ESSEX

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

#### GLASGOW: NORTH

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Posh Nosh Cafe,  
86 Maryhill Rd,  
G20 7QB

#### LANCASTER

Thu 14 Jan, 7.15pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

#### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

##### What is imperialism? A Marxist analysis

Thu 7 Jan, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

#### NEWCASTLE

##### Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party and the fight for socialism

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,  
Broadacre House,  
Market St,  
NE1 6HQ

#### NORWICH

##### Climate change vs capitalism—how do we stop environmental disaster?

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

#### LONDON: BRENT & HARROW

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove (very close  
to the station), W10 5XL

#### LONDON: CAMDEN

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,  
Theatro Technis,  
26 Crowndale Rd, NW1 1TT

#### LONDON: ISLINGTON

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

#### LONDON: LEWISHAM

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community  
and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd,  
(near Greenwich main  
line and DLR Station),  
SE10 8JA

#### LONDON: NEWHAM

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove,  
(next to Morrisons car park),  
E15 1HP

#### LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,  
Camberwell Leisure Centre  
(Room 2), Artichoke Place  
(off Camberwell Church St),  
SE5 8TS

#### POOLE

##### Stop bombing Syria—no to war and imperialism

Mon 18 Jan, 7.30pm,  
The Blue Boar,  
29 Market Close,  
BH15 1NE

#### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

##### The role of the revolutionary paper—why we sell Socialist Worker

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible  
Theatre), S1 2JB

#### YORK

##### Why we get the New Year Blues—Marxism and Alienation

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

#### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,  
Oxford House,  
Derbyshire St  
(opposite Bethnal  
Green Rd Tesco),  
E2 6HG

#### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Quaker Meeting  
House,  
1a Jewel Rd,  
(off Hoe St),  
E17 4QU

#### MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Food Factory,  
884 Stockport Rd,  
Levenshulme,  
M19 3BN

#### MEDWAY

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre,  
Conference Room,  
272 High St,  
ME4 4BP

#### NOTTINGHAM

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
International  
Community Centre,  
61b Mansfield Rd,  
NG1 3FN

### { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

#### BIRMINGHAM

##### Stand Up to the Tories—Stand Up for Democracy in Unison

Sat 16 Jan, 1.30-5pm,  
Carrs Lane Conference  
Centre, Carrs Lane, B4 7SX.  
Open to all Unison members

#### DORCHESTER Can Corbynamics work?

Sat 16 Jan, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,  
Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ.

#### LONDON

##### Unite Against Fascism National Conference

Sat 6 Feb, 9.30am,  
NUT HQ, Hamilton House,  
Mableton Place,  
WC1H 9BD

#### OXFORD

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Restore,  
Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd),  
OX41YH

#### PORTSMOUTH

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown Central,  
Rivers St,  
PO5 4EY

#### SWANSEA

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Brynmill Community  
Centre,  
St Albans Rd,  
SA2 0BP

#### TELFORD

Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Carriages,  
The Parade,  
Wellington,  
TF1 1PY

#### WIGAN

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,  
Little Fifteen pub,  
17-19 Wallgate,  
(opposite Wigan  
Post Office),  
WN1 1LD

#### WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Grain Store,  
King St,  
WV1 1ST

#### Stop Trident—march and rally

Sat 27 Feb, 12 noon,  
central London.

[cnduk.org](http://cnduk.org)

#### NATIONAL

##### Marxism festival 2016

Thu 30 June—Mon 4 July,  
central London

### CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600

Email

[enquires@swp.org.uk](mailto:enquires@swp.org.uk)  
Post PO Box 71327,  
London SE11 9BW



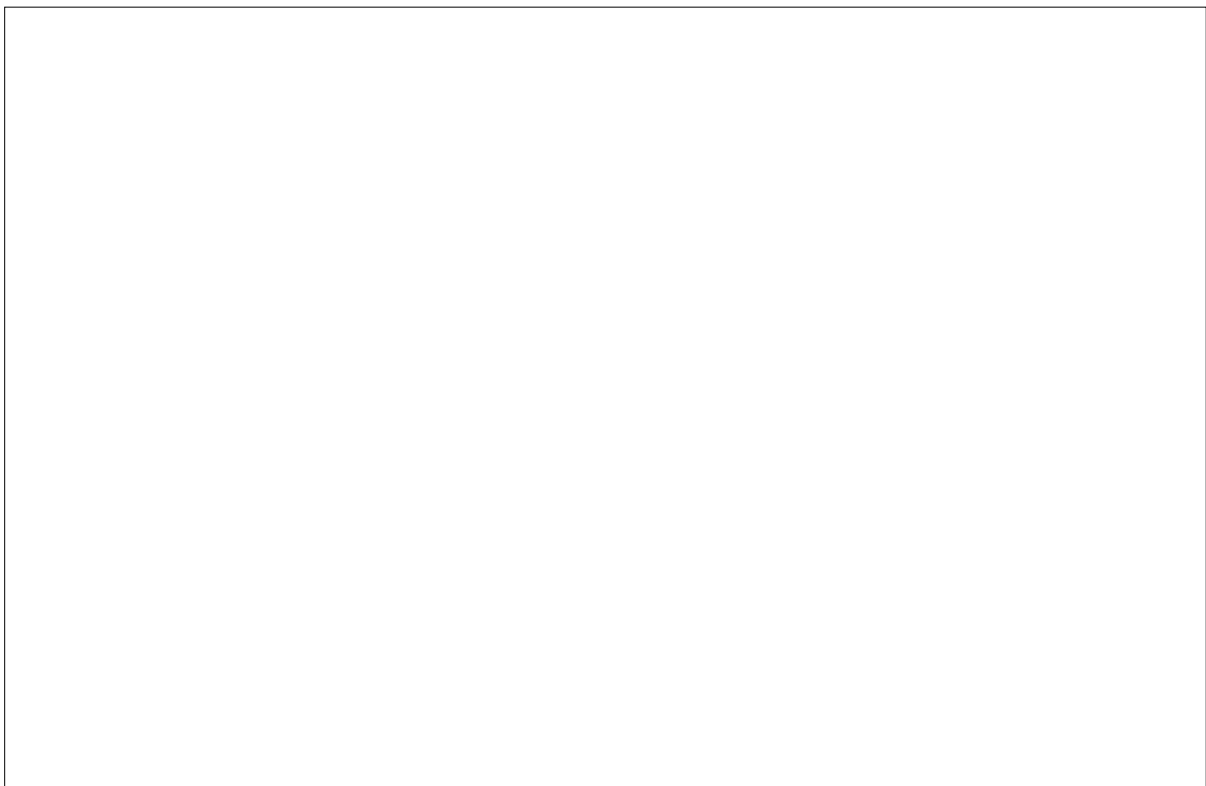
# Dickensian brings together old characters in a fresh plot

The BBC’s Christmas special series Dickensian unites some of Charles Dickens’ best-known characters for a murder mystery, writes **Mary Brodbin**

**DICKENSIAN IS BBC One’s bumper Christmas show this year. The 19-part series promises to be a hugely entertaining “mash-up” of Charles Dickens’ novels.**

It brings together favourite characters—such as Little Nell, Scrooge, Fagin and Miss Havisham—to live alongside each other. And quite audaciously, it changes the storylines of some of Dickens’ best loved works. The first episode, a startling take on A Christmas Carol, will be shown on Boxing Day. In the original, Jacob Marley, Scrooge’s business partner, is already dead. But in this series he’s alive and operating as a much despised moneylender until he meets a mysterious death. Inspector Bucket is drafted in from the novel Bleak House to find the killer. It seems the killer could be one of the other 25 characters borrowed from some of Dickens’ most read books.

**Haunted**  
There is even a suggestion that Scrooge, who is famously haunted by Marley’s ghost, may have carried out the killing. Or could it be Bob Cratchit? He’s Scrooge’s abused and underpaid clerk and the father of Tiny Tim—and one of Dickens’ most memorable symbols of social inequality. Surely not. As one character impoverished by Marley says to Inspector Bucket, “Your problem will not be discovering who hated Jacob Marley enough to kill him, but rather finding someone who didn’t.” Much money has been spent on



**EVERYONE HAS a motive to murder Scrooge’s business partner Jacob Marley**

the fantastic set, which in the first episode is white with snow but dark in content. The cobbled London dockside street where most of the characters live include buildings familiar from Dickens’ works side by side. They include The Three Cripples Pub and Fagin’s Den from Oliver Twist and Mantalini’s dress shop from Nicholas Nickleby. Then there’s Garraway’s coffee shop, which features in stories such as Martin Chuzzlewit, Little Dorrit

and The Pickwick Papers. Fagin and Scrooge are close acquaintances. The half-hour episodes, each ending with a cliff hanger, have been written by former EastEnders scriptwriter Tony Jordan. He says they will be a departure from the “reverential and faithful” way Dickens has been treated in previous TV adaptations. Used to writing cliff-hanging episodes himself Jordan is indeed following in the footsteps of Dickens. He was the master of the

cliff-hanger, who released many of his works in serial form. The acting is first class. Caroline Quentin fills the screen as the highly unpleasant Mrs Bumble, wife of the workhouse manager in Oliver Twist. And the first episode offers enough tantalising changes to the original storylines to keep us guessing and wanting more.

Dickensian  
BBC One  
From 26 December, 9pm

PICTURE: BBC RED PLANET PRODUCTIONS/TODD ANTONY

## A comedy that doesn’t quite reach its low potential

**TELEVISION**  
**TRIPPED**  
Channel 4  
Out now  
  
CHANNEL 4’S Tripped is a drugs comedy gone science fiction drama. Old mates Danny (Blake Harrison) and Milo (George Webster) are drifting apart. Danny is cleaning up his act and leaving Milo behind. This culminates in Danny picking his work mate Paul (Jamie Demetriou) to be best man

at his wedding to Kate (Georgina Campbell). But these old friends are brought together when Milo’s mushroom-induced hallucinations refuse to fade. Danny and Milo are introduced to a multitude of parallel universes. In each of them they, or rather every version of themselves, are hunted by a crazed swordsman. First we are visited by Game of Thrones Danny, sword wielding and clad in leather armour. He introduces Milo to the



**Milo (left) and Danny in Channel 4 show Tripped**

show’s premise, then after a quick sword-fight vanishes. When Milo asks Danny to help him out they soon find themselves trapped in a parallel universe—

where both have far more depressing lives. Time and time again the friends’ leather-clad huntsman appears to chase them. While exciting, it could

become tedious if they don’t start to fight back. Tripped doesn’t quite reach its potential as a comedy or a sci-fi drama. The main characters lack chemistry. They don’t seem to have lost a brotherly bond—just have nothing in common. The jokes and the action are somewhat underwhelming. Tripped won’t be your favourite show. But the acting is good and the show is light-hearted and easy to watch. **Robbie Shaw**

### TELEVISION

SO YOU have Dr Who (Christmas Day, BBC1) and Sherlock (New Year’s Day, 9pm, BBC1). Then there are Christmas specials of every quiz, soap and comedy show. There is no shortage of movies. But here are some gems in the corners of the schedule. Japanese animation group Studio Ghibli films—Princess Mononoke, Howl’s Moving Castle and Spirited Away—are all on FilmFour a couple of times over the season. The story of women workers striking against Ford in 1968 is told in Made in



**Ford strike in Made in Dagenham**

Dagenham (10.55pm, New Year’s Eve, BBC4). Kirk Douglas and Stanley Kubrick take on imperial Rome in the classic epic of a slave revolt Spartacus (Monday 28 December, 4.30pm, ITV4). For a Christmas Carol there’s no shortage of choice. The best is the Alistair Sim version (Christmas Eve, 5.30pm, Channel Five) with the Muppet Christmas Carol (Christmas Day, 2.55pm, ITV1) a close second. Evil bankers and a liberal history of the early 20th century US make It’s a Wonderful Life (Christmas Eve, 2.15pm, Channel 4). The tale of debt, redemption and angels is better than its



**Empire bashed in Zulu Dawn**

schmaltzy reputation. Hitchcock’s Dial M for Murder (Christmas Eve, 11.30pm, BBC2) has a romping plot and a slimy villain—if the compulsory cheer is too much. There’s Cromwell (Sunday 27 December, 11.45am, Channel 5) as an antidote to the queen’s speech. And if the jingoism of a country at war gets too much, try Zulu Dawn (Boxing Day, 5.55pm, 5USA) for a humiliating defeat for the British Empire. **Simon Basketter**



**I**N ORDER to resist fascism today, we need to break through the widespread confusion about what it is.

Our rulers are happy to brand Isis, a reactionary and sectarian outfit, as “Islamofascist” to justify their new war in the Middle East.

In contrast, the mainstream press will describe the likes of the Front National (FN) in France, Golden Dawn in Greece or Jobbik in Hungary as “far right” or “extreme nationalist”. But they refuse to call them fascist.

Meanwhile, thousands have taken to social media to denounce the right wing US presidential candidate Donald Trump as fascist.

This partly flows from a confusion about how fascism is different to other right wing or racist organisations. And any kind of dictatorial rule or repression tends to be branded as “fascist”.

But fascism isn’t just a label to describe reactionary or racist politics.

As author Robert Paxton argues, to grasp what fascism is we must “start with a strategy rather than a definition”.

Its aim is to build a mass movement that can smash working class organisation and democratic rights.

### Unique

Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary, was one of the first to understand what made fascism unique.

He argued it used a dual strategy of both standing in democratic elections and building a street fighting wing to terrorise its opponents.

Fascism first grew after the First World War out of an intense social crisis and the failure of revolution.

The ruling class has always turned to repression, usually by the police and army, to put down revolts and upheavals.

But as capitalism developed so did a mass working class movement that saw ordinary people become politically active.

In normal times liberal democracy can provide capitalists with stability for making profits.

It can diffuse workers’ discontent by channelling it into parliament and let the capitalist parties pretend they represented the “national interest”.

But when the ruling class can find no other way out of a crisis, it will abandon democracy.

Karl Marx described how the French ruling class turned to dictatorship after failed revolutions in 1848.

Only a dictatorship under Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte that temporarily crushed even capitalist parties could overcome the stalemate in the class struggle.

In the 1840s the working

class was still emerging as a social force.

But following the First World War a wave of workers’ revolutions swept Europe. Beginning in Russia, they quickly spread to Hungary, Italy, and Germany and beyond.

Workers’ movements in 1920 in Italy and 1930 in Germany had already come close to taking power. It would take more than dictatorship to destroy them.

To smash the working class movement the ruling class had

UNIFORMED MEMBERS of the fascist Jobbik party in Hungary

# FASCISM— MOVEMENT OF DESPAIR

Socialist Worker argues that fascism is about more than racism or authoritarianism—it’s a movement that aims to smash the working class and all democratic rights

Leon Trotsky



**The rise of fascism was the price paid for the failure of revolution**

to look to another mass movement that could.

So after the Russian Revolution of 1917, the ruling classes turned to brutal violence to carry through the counter revolution.

Had the Russian Revolution failed in 1917, then the word for fascism might have been a Russian one.

Trotsky wrote that fascism provided just such “a razor in the hands of the class enemy” and Paxton called it a “revolution

against the revolution”.

Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) was marginal throughout the 1920s.

In the 1928 election they polled just 2.8 percent. But following the Wall Street Crash they were propelled to the second largest party in 1930 and then topped the poll in the 1932 elections.

But fascists have never seized power purely through elections. The ruling class has always handed them power in times of intense social crisis to deal with the workers’ movement.

Germany had already been ruled by the “cabinet of the barons” since 1930.

The ruling class hadn’t formally abandoned democracy, but had appointed right wing politicians and a top general to head the government.

They all failed to deal with the growing crisis—and the ruling class finally relented to the Nazis’ demands and made Hitler chancellor.

This doesn’t mean that fascism is a ruling class movement.

Fascist organisations’ social base is rooted among the “petty bourgeoisie”—small time capitalists, shop owners, small famers.

**T**rotsky described these middle class layers as “human dust”. They lack the wealth of the big capitalists. But neither are they part of the working class, a social force with the power to fight back collectively.

In Hungary in the 2000s the middle class was actively encouraged to take out large mortgages on Swiss francs.

But the credit crunch in 2008 pushed the country to the verge of bankruptcy and took a sledge hammer to the middle class.

In Greece too it’s been squeezed by the crash and subsequent bailouts. Now Jobbik and Golden Dawn are on the march.

That doesn’t mean fascism is inevitable. In a social crisis that middle class can be pulled to the left or to the right.

That means revolutionary socialists have to pose social transformation as a way out of the crisis.

As Trotsky wrote, “If the Communist Party are the party of revolutionary hope, then fascism is the party of counter revolutionary despair.”

In the early 1920s the middle class in Germany was swinging to the left. Even top civil servants were leaving the employers’ associations and joining the social democratic trade unions.

But that situation swung the other way by 1930s.

The rise of fascism is a political defeat for the working class and the price paid for the failure of revolution.

The Nazis murdered 6 million Jews, Roma and LGBT people in the Holocaust. The

likes of Jobbik today target Jews and Roma people, while Golden Dawn’s gangs murder migrants.

But the main aim of fascism is not the genocide of one ethnic group— but to smash the rights of all working class people.

Antisemitism featured very little in early Nazi propaganda. It was mainly aimed at the need to smash the German Revolution and the people who’d “stabbed Germany in the back” by surrendering to the Allies.

But fascists will often rely on racist ideology to glue this “human dust” together.

In the case of the Nazis it was Antisemitism—but with fascists in Britain and France it’s Islamophobia.

### Scapegoat

They will opportunistically feed off what the ruling class is targeting.

So until recently Polish fascists didn’t focus on Roma people.

Their main target was LGBT people because they were the Polish ruling classes’ main scapegoat.

Fascists have always relied on using brute force on the ground with a respectable political façade.

The Nazis first tried to seize power during the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 in Munich. But only a small number of the ruling class backed them and they were humiliated at the hands of the cops.

They maintained their street fighting wing, but switched to building up a respectable right wing image among the middle class.

Following the Second World War this again became important as the horrors of the Holocaust turned people staunchly against Nazism.

So Marie Le Pen’s FN doesn’t openly worship Hitler or focus on Holocaust denial, instead focusing on the “dangers” of multiculturalism and immigration.

Around the FN is a core of ideologically committed fascists and a violent “security service”. Members vandalise mosques and beat up Muslims, LGBT people and left wingers.

Around it swarm smaller Nazi groups openly devoted to violence against opponents. A close ally is using his mayoral office to form a local militia.

Fascists’ aim is to destroy all of us. That doesn’t mean we



PICTURE: GUY SWALLOW

**Marine Le Pen, leader of the fascist Front National, tried to build a facade of right wing respectability. (top) One of the Unite Against Fascism protests in Luton that helped break the English Defence League (above)**

should rely on a “lesser” right wing evil.

It means building the broadest possible working class opposition and fighting for an alternative to its politics of despair.

Not so long ago the British National Party and English Defence League were surging.

Wherever they tried to hold rallies or conferences they were kettled by mass protests.

Wherever they stood in elections thousands of leaflets calling them Nazis were handed out.

So by mobilising together to confront fascists, we can chip away the outer layers and crush the core that remains.

And we will have to keep nipping fascism in the bud until we uproot the system that keeps producing it.

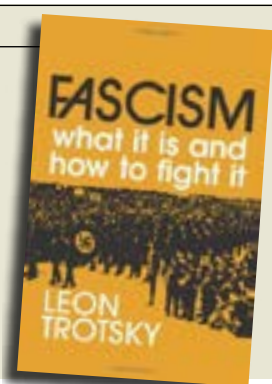
### READ MORE

● **Fascism: what it is and how to fight it** by Leon Trotsky, £4.50

● **The Anatomy of Fascism** by Robert Paxton, £9.99

● **Fascism and Isis** ISJ article by Anne Alexander and Haytham Cero [tinyurl.com/z6osoo9](http://tinyurl.com/z6osoo9)

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



**EYEWITNESS SPAIN**

## Poor choice for voters as Podemos shifts to the right

**Andy Durgan looks at the roots of the political crisis gripping Spain—and says this month’s election won’t resolve the turmoil**

VOTERS IN Spain will go to the polls on 20 December at the end of a year of elections.

Polls took place in Andalusia in January, followed by local and regional elections in May and another vote in Catalonia in September.

The context for this is the economic crisis. Almost 22 percent of people in Spain are unemployed and up to 30 percent live below the poverty line.

First the Socialist Party (PSOE)—Spain’s equivalent of Labour—and then since 2011 the conservative People’s Party (PP) have pushed through austerity.

That has led to massive resistance. There have been three general strikes and rank and file anti-cuts campaigns.

In 2011 the Indignados movement saw tens of thousands of people occupy public squares against corruption and for social justice.

As a result the two-party system, which has dominated Spain since the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1977, has collapsed. The PSOE and PP are challenged on the left by Podemos (We can) and on the right by Ciudadanos (Citizens).

Some opinion polls point to a PP “victory” with a little over 25 percent of the vote. The PSOE and Ciudadanos expect to get around 20 percent, and Podemos slightly less, although some polls showed a surge in its support.

In a proportional electoral system this means that no one party can govern alone. A government could be based on the PP and Ciudadanos.

Elections earlier in the year led to widespread political instability. They also produced important victories for the left. In Barcelona, Madrid and many other cities radical left coalitions have pushed out the right.

In Catalonia, parties

**PABLO IGLESIAS (centre) leads left wing party Podemos**

### BACK STORY

**An economic crisis has encouraged political turmoil in Spain**

- Poverty and austerity have generated resistance
- The two main parties have pushed cuts—and lost support as a result
- They face challenges from the left and the right
- But left wing party Podemos has moved rightwards recently
- More resistance could shift the situation

defending Catalan independence won a majority in September, including ten MPs from the anti-capitalist CUP (Popular Unity Candidatures). Only Podemos promises a referendum.

The PP is set to lose around four million votes, mainly to Ciudadanos. Its message centres on opposing corruption and defending Spanish nationalism.

However many of its largely unknown candidates have a history on the right.



**The two-party system which has dominated Spain has collapsed**

And where it has had representation it has voted systematically with the PP.

Ciudadanos also advocates Spain joining in the bombing of Syria—something that even the PP balks at given the massive opposition to war.

On the left, the PSOE is not expected to recapture the millions of votes it has lost recently. Hopes for change are pinned on Podemos.

But the moderation of its programme in recent months has led to growing disquiet among some of its supporters.

Podemos, led by the charismatic Pablo Iglesias, emerged from the political mood generated by the Indignados.

Its leadership has always argued that the key question is not being left or right but defending policies that benefit the vast majority of people.

This has included raising taxes, reversing cuts, ending corruption and a complete overhaul of the flawed democracy inherited during the late 1970s.

Faced with the emergence of Ciudadanos and being overtaken in opinion polls by the PSOE, Podemos has turned to the right.

It now speaks of only reforming the constitution, rather than far-reaching democratisation. It has dropped its pledge for a minimal social wage for all and is no longer calling for Spain to leave Nato.

Mass mobilisation must return to centre stage if real change is to be achieved. Andy Durgan is a member of En lluita in Barcelona





## NEW PAMPHLET OUT NOW

Jeremy Corbyn's extraordinary victory as Labour leader has given hope to socialists and a renewed sense of confidence. It has boosted everyone on the left.

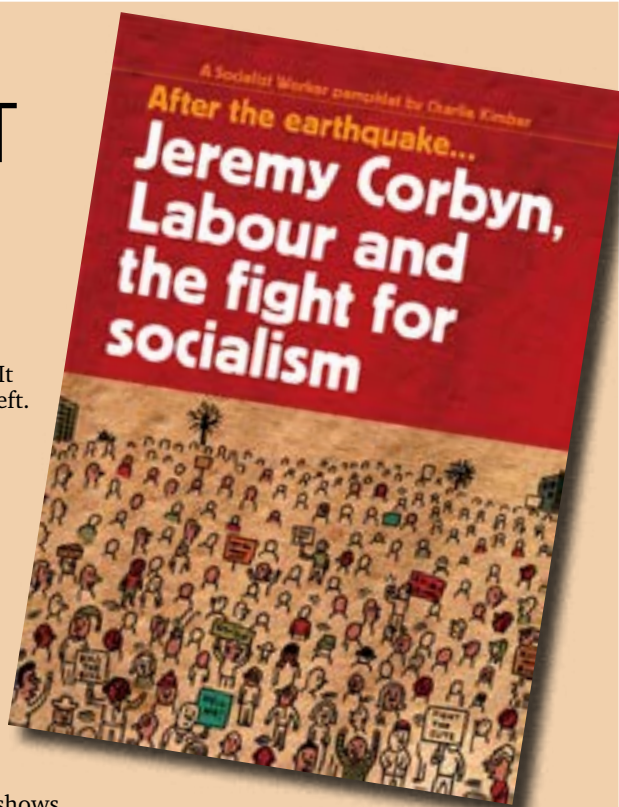
But how can we make the most of this situation?

In this pamphlet Charlie Kimber looks at the roots of Corbyn's triumph, puts it in the context of Labour's history over the last hundred years and examines the potential for further successes—and the obstacles in Corbyn's path.

The ferocious resistance to Corbyn from the Tories, their tame media and some inside the Labour Party shows how much the establishment fears the message that change is possible.

After the Earthquake, Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the Fight for Socialism is for everyone who rejoiced at Corbyn's success and wants to carry it through.

It's for all those who want a world where people come before profit—whether they are in the Labour Party or not.



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web: bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

## Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £150,000

Thanks to everyone who has donated to the Socialist Worker Appeal.

We have received £100,359 so far. Help us reach our £150,000 target – donate today!

Go to the website below, call us on 020 7840 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW



The NHS block of the march against austerity Photo: Guy Smallman

This summer we have seen people march against austerity, welcome refugees and back the anti-austerity politics of Jeremy Corbyn. The tide is turning against the 1%. The British media owned by the rich has tried to hold back that tide. We need to report our own news if we are going to smash austerity and change society once and for all."

**Jane Aitchison**

PCS activist and Unite the Resistance joint national secretary (pc)

[www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/appeal)

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# There will be more deaths if you keep cutting fire service

Firefighters and their FBU union are sounding the alarm about the impact of successive cuts to fire stations, engines and jobs. Cuts are already increasing the dangers, writes Nick Clark

**CHOI YIP** died after leaping from a third storey window at his sheltered accommodation in Camden, north London, at the end of October. He was trying to escape a fire.

It took 13 minutes for the first fire engine to arrive at the scene. That's more than double London Fire Brigade's six minute target.

Neighbour Pat Bell said he was "almost positive" that Choi could have been saved if the engine had arrived sooner.

But the crew at nearby Kentish Town fire station were battling a fire in north west London. And the next closest station, Belsize Park, was closed in 2014.

Yet London fire commissioner Ron Dobson—backed up by Tory mayor Boris Johnson—is determined to push ahead with more cuts. The pair want to scrap 13 fire engines as part of a plan to save £11 million.

London Fire Brigade has already suffered the loss of 14 engines, ten fire stations and around 500 jobs last year.

## Drastic

Gareth Beeton, a London regional official from the Firefighters' FBU union, told Socialist Worker, "The further reductions in fire cover would equate to around another 200 jobs. This will drastically reduce the fire cover to Londoners, and also the safety of firefighters."

This isn't just a London problem. Brigades in regions such as Gloucestershire, Northumberland, Cumbria, North Yorkshire, The West Midlands and Manchester face dangerous cutbacks.

Fire authorities are passing on cuts from local councils, many of which are controlled by Labour.



FIREFIGHTERS JOIN a FBU lobby of City Hall in London this month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Central government grants to fire authorities were cut by more than a fifth during the last parliament.

And more than 5,000 firefighter jobs were slashed by the Tories, and over 40 fire stations closed.

Now firefighters are bracing for more.

Manchester firefighter Simon Hickman explained, "The grant from central government has been getting cut. They expect us to make efficiency savings."

Firefighters in Manchester were

awaiting full details of planned cuts to their brigade as Socialist Worker went to press.

But the Labour-run council says it may slash as much as £27.6 million.

Simon said, "If that worst case scenario went through, it would be devastating. We wouldn't be able to support neighbouring brigades."

On Sunday 29 November, high winds saw Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue receive 129 calls in three hours as crews had to respond incidents including fallen trees, damaged

buildings, dislodged chimney stacks and road blockages.

The brigade issued a warning on Twitter. "ALL our resources are currently attending incidents," it read.

"Our resilience is being seriously tested. Please be patient."

Simon said, "If we're stretched by the weather, imagine what it would be like if there's a major incident."

"Even some of the chiefs are saying this can't continue. You can't expect a service if you carry on cutting like this."

## Launch a national campaign

**FIREFIGHTERS** have started a fightback. FBU branches have lobbied fire authority meetings in London, North Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

In West Midlands firefighters were balloting for an overtime ban. And London could also see industrial action.

This is a good start. But as Simon from Manchester explained, to win will take a bigger campaign aimed at stopping central government cuts.

He said, "Firefighters want communities to put up a fight but we know that's not always enough."

"In Manchester no stations have been shut. Instead bosses made it so you would have a fire engine most of the time, except for some nights. It's difficult to have a campaign around that."

"Now it's got to the stage where there's going to be cuts. We need a national campaign".

# Bosses expect overstretched firefighters to do even more work

**WEST MIDLANDS** Fire and Rescue service is one brigade that's taken a major battering over the last few years as austerity has started to bite.

The FBU brigade chair Andrew Scattergood spoke to Socialist Worker.

He said, "We're waiting for the next budget. But we've already lost £28 million, and expecting to lose another £14 million. We're already down to the bone."

Fire authority bosses are already planning on phasing out 300 jobs by not replacing firefighters when they leave the service.

They call this loss "natural wastage".

The brigade will become increasingly reliant on firefighters working overtime to provide a proper service.

"They're looking at 25,000 shifts a year in overtime—that means about 25 extra shifts per firefighter," Andrew told Socialist Worker.

"It means there may not always be enough resources to mobilise an appliance."

He added, "In terms of safety, if resources aren't available, if the next

station is understaffed, that means you have to wait longer for another fire engine to come from further away."

In North Yorkshire, as many as six fire engines could be replaced with smaller Tactical Response Vehicles (TRVs). The two-person crews of these trucks can't enter buildings or deal with traffic accidents without

backup from a larger crew.

Vital minutes could be lost. North Yorkshire have trialled similar vehicles before.

The trial was a disaster, as former North Yorkshire firefighter Pete Woolley knows.

## Record

In a video he tells of how "helpless" he felt after arriving at a serious fire in a vehicle he and his colleagues nicknamed the "ice cream van".

But the fire authority is determined to push ahead with the plans—despite the response to a public consultation being overwhelmingly against them.

North Yorkshire FBU

secretary Steve Howley told Socialist Worker, "It seems there's a pre-determined decision being made."

He added, "We've had the highest number of fatalities in North Yorkshire in at least ten years, and probably the highest on record—five this year."

"The brigade states that there has only been two fatalities."

"That's because they're using the financial year, April to April. But if you go by the calendar year, it's been five."

"Cutting the frontline is always the first port of call for North Yorkshire."

See the video at [no2firecuts.com](http://no2firecuts.com)



FBU members are against cuts

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN



## IN BRIEF

**Library workers to ballot over cuts**

LIBRARY WORKERS in Lambeth, south London, are set to begin a ballot for strikes on Wednesday of this week.

They are fighting cuts to libraries implemented by the Labour-run council.

The Unison union members walked out unofficially last month and shut the borough's ten libraries for the day.

The ballot is set to last into the New Year.

**Yorkshire Nazis met with protest**

SOUTH YORKSHIRE Casuals, a split from the English Defence League held a demonstration against accepting refugees in Barnsley last Saturday

They mustered about 70, including a coach from the North East of England.

A counter rally of around 70 people assembled in the town centre. It was lively and a number of refugees spoke.

The counter protest was called by Barnsley Trades Council, Barnsley Borough City of Sanctuary, Stand Up to Racism and Unite Against Fascism.

**George Arthur**

**Bus bosses get a Christmas gift**

IN AN unnecessary gift to the bosses, the Unite union called off a bus drivers' strike set to take place in Medway, Kent, on Monday of this week.

Regional officer Dave Weeks called it a "goodwill gesture for passengers eager to do their Christmas shopping".

But the busy period gives workers extra leverage.

The workers walked out last week against bosses' changes to their timetable.

Bosses offered concessions but more strikes are planned in January.

**Insurance workers' strike on the cards**

THE UNITE union began a ballot for strikes against job cuts at Legal & General insurance company (L&G) in Kingswood, Surrey, on Friday of last week.

Up to 1,550 jobs are threatened by plans to close the site in 2017. Workers voted by 68 percent for strikes in a consultative ballot in September.

**Waiters tipped for hotel protest**

HOTEL WORKERS were set to protest outside the ME Hotel on The Strand, central London, on Thursday and Friday of this week.

The Unite union, which has called the protests, say bosses from hotel owner Melia are taking 6 percent of tips from restaurant staff.

## POSTAL WORKERS



CWU UNION members rally at Mount Pleasant delivery office in London for Postal Workers Day on Monday of this week

PICTURE: ALAN KENNY

## SPORTS DIRECT

# Union activists recruit Sports Direct workers

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

ACTIVISTS ARE organising to take on union-bashing Sports Direct bosses in Shirebrook, Derbyshire.

The company, owned by millionaire Mike Ashley, has been at the centre of scandals over working conditions.

They include making workers queue after work in order to be searched—

sometimes strip-searched.

Colin Hampton is the Unite community branch secretary.

He told Socialist Worker, "It's been difficult to unionise, because people can get sacked at a second's notice."

The latest campaign began when Unite members and supporters held a rally outside the Sports Direct AGM in September.

Activists are now organising English for Speakers of Other

Languages (Esol) classes for migrant workers that will begin in the New Year.

Some 80 people have already signed up.

Aubrey is one of the people being trained to teach English. He said, "Many of the workers are eastern European migrants and don't speak English."

"But this is a way of getting them together to learn English—and their workplace rights."

## GMB UNION

## Traffic wardens walk out

TRAFFIC WARDENS in Brighton and Hove struck for higher pay on Friday and Saturday of last week.

The GMB union members are demanding a 4 percent pay rise from outsourcing giant NSL.

The workers were set to walk out between 19 and 23 December.

They struck for two days at the beginning of this month.

A recent win by traffic wardens in the Unison union in Camden, north London, shows that NSL can be made to back down.

They forced a 5.4 percent increase from NSL bosses after 11 days of strikes.

## RAIL WORKERS

WORKERS AT rail engineering firm Alstom in Chester struck for 24 hours on Thursday of last week.

They maintain trains on the Arriva Trains Wales franchise.

The RMT union members are in dispute over pay and conditions.

They began action short of strike on Friday of last week, meaning they will not take overtime or work any rest days.

## TRADE UNION BILL

## Thousands join Glasgow rally against Tory union bill

By RAYMIE KIERNAN in Glasgow

SOME 1,700 people joined a Scottish TUC (STUC) rally against austerity and the Tories' Trade Union Bill in Glasgow on Thursday of last week.

It brought together trade unionists, campaigners, Labour and Scottish National Party (SNP) members, people from opposite sides of the independence debate and many more.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was the keynote speaker and closed the rally. SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon also spoke but seemed like a fish out of water addressing a trade union crowd.

STUC general secretary Grahame Smith pledged that any trade union forced to defy the law would have "the support of the collective, organised Scottish trade union movement".

Young activists resisting zero hours employers and building trade unions lifted the rally.

They spoke about their protests targeting the zero hours' employer, G1 Group.

Cafe worker and Bfawu union member Lorna

McKinnon connected the struggle against zero hours to the battle against the bill.

"We can't let them turn back the clock on trade union rights," she said.

For all the speeches, union officials failed to offer any clear plan.

But PCS Scotland secretary Lynn Henderson argued for a mass trade union mobilisation for the first industrial action after the bill passes.

●THE TUC has announced a week of action against the Tories' anti-trade union bill.

It is set to take place between 8-14 February next year. General secretary Frances O'Grady said the week will, "showcase the amazing work unions do".

The week of action can provide a focus for union activists. Those with live disputes at the time should use the week to coordinate industrial action.

The bill will go for its second reading in the House of Lords on 11 January.

It is expected to go back to the House of Commons in late February.

●See heartunions.org

## UNISON UNION

## Election should be re-run

THE RESULT of the Unison union's general secretary election was set to be announced on Thursday of this week.

Evidence suggests union officials used their paid time to campaign for incumbent Dave Prentis. This contravenes union rules.

Unison has appointed an assistant general secretary, who supports Prentis's campaign, to conduct an

internal investigation.

Activists protested outside a meeting of Unison's national executive committee (NEC) on Wednesday of last week demanding an independent inquiry.

But the NEC voted not to discuss the matter.

The election should be declared null and void and a new election run.

●Sign the petition at [chn.ge/1QeRnOX](http://chn.ge/1QeRnOX)

## OBITUARY

### Anna Owens 1967-2015

ANNA, MY partner, was one in a million. Her school friends recall a strong character who stood up to bullies and looked out for the vulnerable.

These characteristics remained constants of Anna's joyous personality.

Anna came to London after growing up in Ireland then Kirkby, near Liverpool.

Being a rebel who opposed oppression informed her politics. She never backed away from a fight.

Many from the time recall a confident, articulate activist in the CPSA, forerunner to the PCS union.

In the late 1980s she got stuck into a strike to stop



Anna Owens

Malcolm Skeggs, a fascist, working in Soho. She delighted in telling how actors Christopher Reeve and Paul Eddington supported strikers by not crossing their picket line, which was adjacent to an acting studio.

Anna worked in Bloomsbury, central London. She was involved in militant action which led the then right

wing leadership of the CPSA to close Inner London branch down. They hadn't reckoned with Anna and co and received a hell of a fightback.

Anna was victimised by bosses in August 1993 over her campaigning for Justice for Joy Gardner, who died in a police raid to deport her.

She was under huge pressure to drop the issue. But she won respect in the union because to her great credit she didn't.

Many tributes from fellow PCS members say that Anna's activity and speeches, for example at many PCS conferences, inspired them.

Anna loved sticking it to the other side, whether humiliating racists or organising strikes at her last workplace, Euston Tower. She

was a longstanding Socialist Workers Party member.

Anna was a relentless fighter for Unite against Fascism. Her union branch banner and a delegation from her workplace were constants at many anti-fascist demos.

She was well known as "Anna with the banner".

She never sought glory or acclaim for herself.

Many workmates tell of Anna's tireless endeavour on their behalf. As a rank and file activist she on principle wouldn't take a higher grade.

She was a working class intellectual who loved literature and music. Anna loved life. As seriously as she took the struggle, Anna was the life and soul of a party and a riot to be at live gigs with.

The cancer that took her

was aggressive and extremely painful. She didn't want others to worry and rarely complained.

On our last night out, surrounded by friends, she was in intermittent pain, but never let on and had a fine time.

Anna was fearless, and full of the best qualities of the human spirit.

She showed us how to think through and fight to get the most out of this often rotten world.

She will always, always be in our hearts.

**Paul Sillett**

●Anna's funeral is on Wednesday 23 December, 11am, Manor Park cemetery, Sebert Rd, Forest Gate, London, E7 ONP. All are welcome



EDUCATION

# Students occupy to halt campus closure

by NICK CLARK

**STUDENTS AT the Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design in east London occupied a university gallery space on Wednesday of last week.**

They are demanding that London Metropolitan University bosses scrap plans to close the campus.

Management wants to sell the City Campus in east London and merge it with the north London campus. This would see courses closed and jobs cut.

The London Met UCU and Unison union branches held an emergency protest outside the occupation on Thursday of last week.

## Ballot

Mark Campbell, UCU branch chair, pledged “100 percent support” for the students against the bosses’ attack.

He said the branch was “moving to a strike ballot” over the plans.

Mark added, “They’re going to be cutting staff and squeezing us into ever smaller spaces—and they’re saying it’s all about student experience.”

“There’s only one word for that—bullshit.”

The planned closures come after a period of financial problems for the university.



THE OCCUPIED building in east London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Bosses hope to raise £50 million by selling off university buildings.

But they have since admitted that they have now cleared a £30 million debt, meaning the university is now debt free.

Management have also suspended Robert Mull as dean of the Cass for opposing the plans.

Supporters held a protest at the university’s Holloway Road campus in

north London on Monday of this week to demand Mull’s reinstatement.

Meanwhile, the occupiers need all the support they can get to keep going.

Amanda Marrillier from the student union told Socialist Worker, “They’re allowed to get out, but they can’t get back in.”

“There’s a letterbox to the outside which people have been passing supplies through.

“And the toilet is on the outside of the room, so they’re having to use a bucket with sawdust.”

Supporters were set to hold a performance outside the occupied gallery on Wednesday evening in solidarity.

●Take supplies to The Cass Central Building, E1 7PF  
Send solidarity messages to @occupythecass on twitter or Occupy Cass—London Met on Facebook

COLLEGES

## FE lecturers vote to give SNP a parcel of discontent

COLLEGE lecturers in Scotland have voted by 92 percent in favour of national industrial action in an indicative ballot. The turnout was 55 percent.

The EIS-Fela union members are campaigning for equal pay across Scotland’s colleges.

They are expected to begin a national ballot for “sustained strikes” early in the New Year.

The lecturers and college support staff in the Unison union have rejected a 1 percent pay offer.

Bosses can well afford a higher pay rise for staff.

In recent years £106 million of funding has been put into Arm’s Length Foundations.

It would cost around £11 million to meet the pay

claim. Yet the Scottish National Party (SNP) government’s education budget for 2014-15 had a £72 million underspend.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) has allowed 13 former college principals to walk away with £2.4 million in redundancy packages.

Some 60 union members protested outside the SFC headquarters on Friday of last week. Many were in festive costume with one Santa Claus, pictured, leading the rally.



Festive FE fury

Union activists must now prepare to build an even bigger turnout and argue for a vote for strikes. This can pile pressure on the SNP ahead of Scottish elections in May.

HIGHER EDUCATION

**OPEN University (OU) workers struck across Britain last week.**

OU bosses want to close seven regional centres and slash over 500 jobs.

The UCU union members struck in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Milton Keynes on Friday of last week.

This followed walkouts in Manchester on Thursday and

Nottingham on Wednesday.

●Send messages of support to ucu@open.ac.uk

■UCU members at the University of Aberdeen are balloting for strikes after bosses refused to rule out compulsory redundancies.

Bosses had previously agreed not to impose them after a ballot in June.

SCHOOLS

## Strike beats school bosses

by JEANNIE ROBINSON

NUT UNION members at Alfreton Grange academy in North Derbyshire have won over working conditions.

Management wanted to double the number of daily lessons.

After 11 days of strikes school bosses agreed to talks without pre-conditions at the Acas conciliation service.

The NUT maintained the action during the Acas talks. And around 200 people, attended a public meeting during the dispute.

The pickets were lively and supported by parents, pupils and local councillors.

The school has now returned to its five-session day.

Their victory shows that determined action can win.

■Teachers at Small Heath School in Birmingham struck on Thursday of last week.

It was the NUT, NASUWT and ATL union members’ fifth walkout in their fight to stop

the school becoming an academy.

●Send messages of support to banut@btclick.com

■NUT union members at Tech City free school in Islington, north London, began a three-day strike over working conditions on Tuesday of this week.

The walkout follows a two-day strike last week.

Bosses agreed to meet two of the NUT’s three minimum conditions if the union recommended suspending the strike.

But bosses later withdrew an offer to authorise pay progression rises this year for four teachers who had been unfairly denied it.

■Teachers at Sudbury Primary school in Brent, west London, have voted to call on their unions to move towards a strike ballot.

They have previously held a vote of no-confidence in head teacher Uma Pandya. Workers says children are “belittled” by Pandya.

POST WORKERS

## Strikes force concessions from Royal Mail bosses

ROYAL MAIL bosses in Bridgwater, Somerset, have moved towards reinstating a disabled worker kept on sick leave.

It follows an unofficial strike last month.

Over 100 post workers walked out in November in defence of Andrew Mootoo.

Royal Mail bosses kept Andrew on sick leave for so long after he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) that his pay was stopped.

But members of the CWU union struck unofficially to demand that bosses negotiate seriously about getting Andrew back to work.

He has now been offered

a part time position working indoors.

Bridgwater CWU rep Dave Chapple said, “As a direct result of our strike, Royal Mail have now agreed a completely fresh attempt to work with the CWU and give Andrew a part time indoor job in Bridgwater.”

“We have not got reinstatement yet, but for the first time in a year the employer is now taking us seriously.”

He added, “I am still humbled by over 100 post workers giving up a day’s pay to defend a profoundly deaf colleague with MS.”

This shows unofficial action gets results.

STEEL

## Sacked before Christmas with no fightback in sight

THE MASS steel job losses announced by Tata Steel in October are beginning.

At the Dalzell and Clydebridge works in Lanarkshire 70 workers are to be laid off before Christmas.

In Scunthorpe, north Lincolnshire, workers facing the sack were invited to a jobs fair on Thursday of this week.

Some 900 job losses are underway at the steel works. And local contractors announced over 700 job losses in recent weeks as a knock-on effect.

Tata also confirmed plans for another round of job cuts in spring—the majority in Rotherham.

The past week has seen

positive headlines about new buyers saving steel jobs.

The Gupta family has bought many of the bankrupt Caparo group’s businesses, limiting job losses.

And there is speculation of private equity groups buying Tata’s “long products” division—including much of Scunthorpe. Bosses say they will shut the division if it doesn’t sell.

But a new buyer is no guarantee. With bosses desperate to sell and industry profit rates low there is every chance of vultures looking to asset strip the carcass.

Nationalisation could still save jobs. But the union leaders have so far refused to lead the sort of fight that could make that happen.



# ANGER IN PARIS AT DIRTY DEAL

by DAVE SEWELL in Paris

**AS POLITICIANS cut a dirty deal on climate change, some 20,000 people protested on the streets of Paris last Saturday.**

Among the biggest of various actions, activists blocked the road by the Arc de Triomphe in a massive “red line” against pollution.

Isabelle from London found it “inspiring”. She said, “I’ve been on protests before, but never a direct action.

“But having a child has made me see it’s needed—what will the future be like if I don’t act?”

“We need people to take to the streets and get arrested if necessary.”

The action had been banned under France’s state of emergency.

## Companies

For Sonia from Bolivia, “It’s a way of keeping the people from having our say while the politicians and big companies are negotiating.”

But the authorities backed down as organisers held firm and thousands attended meetings through the week. “That shows the effect of mobilising,” said Sonia.



CLIMATE ACTIVISTS march through Paris

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Few campaigners expected much from the negotiations. Salion from Senegal said, “They are too focused on who pays for pollution.

“It should be about stopping pollution.”

Protesters had planned

to go in small groups to an authorised rally and concert by the Eiffel Tower. Instead it became a march, and people chanted anti-capitalist slogans.

Student Nora from Finland said, “It was good to march

through so many places—people could see us looking cheerful and powerful.”

Much of the demonstration was international. A delegation of around 500, organised by Friends of the Earth, came from Britain.

The state of emergency appeared to have kept some Parisians away, but gave others extra motivation.

Pascaline said the ban “means our protests can be even more significant and visible.

“It also shows how capitalism is in crisis, and how we need to do something about it.”

But there was much debate about what to do. Some aimed to pressure politicians, others to get rid of the system. Many talked about lifestyle changes.

But Huon from Australia said, “It’s going in the right direction—away from things like ‘oh, turn off your tap when you’re cleaning your teeth’.

## Serious

“No serious climate organisation talks like that any more.”

Around 40 people came from the Red Youth in Norway. Aram said, “It needs to be old school style—united, like in a union.”

More typical were those brought by NGOs, such as Frederik from Belgium, who described his ideas as “more like anarchism”.

He said, “It’s important to see how many people from different ideologies are coming together—and this is just the start.”

People wanted to keep up the fight. Pascaline said, “We need to keep building. It has to be about a mass movement, not small actions.”

## Politicians ‘aspire’ to stop climate change—and pledge to let planet burn

THE DEAL saw politicians “aspire” to keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

In reality, their deal will heat the world up more than twice as much.

Top polluters congratulated themselves for the “historic” agreement.

But for it to work most gas, oil and coal reserves would have to stay in the ground. They aren’t mentioned once.

Bosses know what this means. World Coal Organisation chief Benjamin Sporton

predicted no “massive change at the moment”.

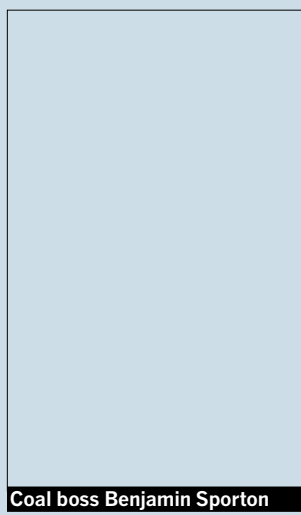
For British oil boss Amjad Beisu, “the industry has other challenges”.

Every country that signed the deal has a plan for reducing its emissions below a projected “business as usual”.

## Increasing

For developing countries that still allows for increasing emissions.

Developed countries can continue to reduce them very slowly, partly by offshoring polluting



Coal boss Benjamin Sporton

industries. The plans don’t include aviation and shipping—which make up 10 percent of emissions.

They leave a lot of room for massaging the figures.

Nothing stops governments breaking them.

US Republican opposition leaders vowed to scupper theirs.

But even if they were accurate and binding, scientists say they mean three degrees warming—or even four or more.

In theory the plans will be “ratcheted” up.

But not for at least five

years, and then there’s no guarantee.

The deal doesn’t call for emissions to fall until a “peak” that could come as late as 2050.

Even that is global “net” emissions.

## Funding

That means bosses can gamble on not cutting emissions in case carbon capture technology is developed to take them out of the atmosphere.

Yet there is no reason to believe such technologies will ever exist.

Last month the Tories

cut £1 billion of funding for research to find out.

Richer countries promised that after 2020 they’ll give poorer countries money they’d already promised in 2009.

The 1.5 degree target is a longstanding demand of island nations threatened by rising seas.

And it’s one that big polluters have long resisted.

Its inclusion shows the pressure to act.

But with nothing to make it happen, it’s just a fake alibi for wrecking the climate.